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THE CHIEF CONCERNS OF MAN FOR TIME AND ETERNITY.

L. B. SEELEY AND SONS, WESTON GREEN,
THAMES DITTON, SURREY.

THE

CHIEF CONCERNS OF MAN

FOR

TIME AND ETERNITY.

BY THE REV. E. BICKERSTETH,
RECTOR OF WATTON, HERTFORDSHIRE.

SECOND EDITION.

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TO THE CONGREGATION

OF

WHELER CHAPEL, SPITAL SQUARE,

THIS VOLUME OF DISCOURSES

PREACHED BEFORE THEM,

AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,

BY THEIR LATE MINISTER,

THE AUTHOR

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE Discourses of this Volume formed a course of Valedictory Sermons, preached at Wheler Chapel in the autumn of 1830. The notes, from which they were preached, were prepared in all the pressure of engagements connected with the relinquishment of an arduous scene of labour, and they were written out, and sent to the press amidst the many calls of a new situation, and the entire charge of a Country Parish.

The Author could not refuse the earnest desire of those who heard them for their publication; and his hope respecting them is, that they may be useful to a beloved Congregation, among whom the Author laboured for many years, and

possibly to others who are desiring plain scriptural truths on common but the most important subjects.

He has in this edition omitted a few passages of merely temporary and local interest.

He commends them to the blessing of Him who can use the weakest earthen vessel to preserve and convey the treasures of his grace.

WATTON, HERTS,
DEC. 3, 1832.

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SERMON I.

THE DAY OF GRACE.

2 CORINTHIANS VI. 1, 2.

We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

ANXIOUSLY considering to what subjects I might most profitably direct your attention, it has appeared to me that I could not occupy your minds more advantageously than by bringing before you those all-important topics—the Day of Grace, Death, the Resurrection, Judgment, Eternity, Hell and Heaven; which fix our state for ever, and finally closing earthly relations, in their immense magnitude swallow up all inferior concerns:—topics confessedly of supreme importance, and

calculated in their very nature to engage our most wakeful attention, and bearing most directly upon every man's liveliest hopes and fears.

In the review of these things, may we all be deeply affected with the awful truth, that on this momentary life hangs an eternity pregnant with consequences of the most stupendous interest. This is the great principle brought before you in the text: *We then, as workers together with him beseech you that ye receive not the grace of God in vain; for he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee; behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*

The subject then of our present consideration is, THE DAY OF GRACE. The grace of God is now to be obtained, and the present day is the season for obtaining it. If we reject that grace, we perish for ever; if we receive it, we are everlastingly saved.

We will consider,

1. THE GRACE OF GOD,
2. THE SEASON OF GRACE,
3. THE GIVING OF GRACE,
4. THE RECEIVING OF IT IN VAIN,
5. THE RECEIVING IT EFFECTUALLY.

I. THE GRACE OF GOD.

The grace here meant is free unmerited favour

to sinners, proceeding from the sole love of God our Father, and manifesting itself according to their varied wants and necessities.

We will notice, 1. The grace itself; and, 2. The channel through which it flows.

1. THE GRACE ITSELF.

The Apostle had just given a full description of this grace. *All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* We have here a clear and full revelation of gospel grace, of God's good will to us, the good tidings of great joy to perishing sinners.

Man was created upright, but, being tempted by the devil, he rebelled against his Creator and Benefactor; and, if rich grace had not interposed, he would justly have perished for ever. But, O the riches of that unspeakable love, which, in pity to fallen sinners, provided a remedy!

From the beginning to the end, the gospel

unfolds a system of grace. The whole plan of salvation originated in the divine purpose, before the world was made. *He hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our own works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.* (2 Tim. i. 9.) And as it originated in grace, so all the preliminary steps of it have been gratuitous. The promises to Adam, on his fall, and to the patriarchs; the types and shadows in the Law of Moses; the exhibitions of it in the prophetic writings, until its full manifestation in *the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light*—not one step was advanced through man's wisdom or goodness; but all proceed from the overflowing fountain of divine love. God is therefore altogether sovereign in the disposal of grace, saying, *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.*

The blessings of this glorious *Gospel of the grace of God*, are also equally free and gracious. Spiritual life and conversion to God are the first, that a sinner, dead in sin, requires. *God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he hath loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved),* (Ephes. ii. 4, 5.) Then he wants free and

full forgiveness. This is also of grace; *We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.* (Eph. i. 7.) To be accounted righteous, as well as forgiven, is further indispensable; the same grace justifies; *Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.* (Rom. i. 24.) *Holiness* also, *without which no man shall see the Lord,* is absolutely requisite, as, without this, we should be miserable even in heaven itself. It is *the grace of God which bringeth salvation,* that *teacheth us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.* (Titus ii. 11, 12.) Nor is there any thing pertaining to our present and everlasting good, which is not freely provided and made over to God's people in Christ Jesus. *Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.* (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.) And while it is made over to them, they are themselves guarded and secured from ever losing it. The glorious inheritance above is *reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.*

Now then, my brethren, we proclaim these blessings, and, in the very language of the divine record invite you to partake of them. Ho, every

one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price.

But do you say I have forfeited every claim by many sins—Consider farther then,

2. THE CHANNEL THROUGH WHICH IT FLOWS.

God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. There is a mediator for sinners. The treasury of grace is in Christ. All its fulness dwells in him, and is to be received from him. The gracious declaration of our text was originally made to the Head of his Church. *Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee, and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people.* (Isa. xlix. 8.)

The gift of Christ was the chief expression of the Father's love to man. *In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* (1 John iv. 9, 10.) And by that gift he encourages us most surely to expect every other. *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* (Rom. viii. 32.)

And not only by the gift of Christ has he assured us of his love, our text leads us to remark that he has also made Christ himself an example and the model of his grace to man. The promise, *I have heard thee,* was originally made to the Messiah. Whatever was done for the help of our Divine Head, shall, in a subordinate sense, be done for his people, to carry them through all impediments, *till he bring forth judgment to victory.* The promises made to him, in the first instance, belong, as far as they are needful for salvation, to all his disciples. The help which he received is a picture of the help which those who believe in him shall receive through him. Moreover, he is also the Dispenser of all God's grace to sinners. Absent from us, as to his personal presence, yet, though *ascended up on high, he has received gifts, yea, even for the rebellious:* and as a Prince and Saviour, he sheds forth those gifts, according to the necessities of his Church and people. *The God of all grace hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus,* (1 Pet. v. 10.) and every blessing in the way thither is received through him.

Oh, with what confidence and assurance of success may you come to the throne of grace! One sits there, who loved his enemies; one sits there who lived and died for sinners, and *makes intercession for the transgressors, and* is the same

yesterday, to-day, and for ever. If you ask why sinners receive blessings, and why God bears with the perverseness of his people, and still showers down his loving kindnesses on them day by day? I reply, because he delights to gratify the sinner's Saviour—his own, his only, his beloved Son, in whom he is always well-pleased. It is not for your sake, but because you are purchased by the blood of Jesus, and belong to him; therefore, does the Father heap mercies on the unworthy.

Here then, you see what a provision of grace there is in the gospel—How full and how complete! O that it may not be set before you in vain!—but that each heart may offer up the prayer, *Remember me, O Lord,* with this favour; *Visit me,* even me, *with thy salvation, O Lord.* To animate and rouse you to fervor in the use of such petitions, consider,

II. THE SEASON OF GRACE.

He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation!

In reference to this season of grace, observe, 1. The deplorable want of it; 2. The invaluable possession; and, 3. The attention which it demands.

1. THE DEPLORABLE WANT OF IT.

There are those who have lost the divine grace, and all hope of recovering it.

The fallen angels once basked in the sunshine of divine love and favour. Their first state was beautiful and glorious. By pride they fell. They *kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation.* (Jude 6.) No grace was manifested as far as is revealed to us, planning their recovery; no season for their restoration. *For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.* (Heb. ii. 16.) They were to be the monuments for ever of the extent of the divine power, the dreadfulness of his wrath, and severity of his justice. O the strictness of that justice, which left those wicked spirits in all the misery of their fall; no way of escape devised for them! no appointed season of grace!

The lost souls in hell, once had a day of grace. On earth, like us they were probationers for heaven. They had life, and health, and strength. They had power of mind, and affections of heart, and the conscience of right and wrong. They knew that they were mortal, yet destined for immortality. The volume of nature was opened to all, and to many the volume of grace. But loving darkness rather than light, the precious seasons of grace were frittered away and finally lost for ever.

O methinks, could we to these lost souls proclaim another day of grace, another season of opportunity and escape, one more space of trial: from every imprisoned spirit in hell, would break forth the earnest supplications, 'Oh, try us, yet this once,—once again, try us: we will no more slight the offered mercy, no more neglect the great salvation; no more make an earthly world our home, no more be drunk with the riches and pleasures, the cares and business of a transitory state. Oh! we shall think all the yoke of Christ easy, his burden light indeed! Try us again, Oh try us yet this once.'

But every rising expectation there, is crushed with—*Remember, thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things.* Thou hast deliberately preferred the world and its good things to God and his favour, and now it is too late. *Thy harvest is past, thy summer is ended,*—never, never to return.

Even in this world, I must not conceal the awful truth, men may forfeit the advantage of a day of grace. Just as *Esau who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing he was rejected; for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.* (Heb. xii. 16, 17.) The sinner may harden his own heart, till God leaves him to his own hardness, withdrawing from him his

Holy Spirit, giving him up to his own heart's lusts, and to walk in his own counsèls. Ps. lxxxi. 12.

O sinner, harden not thine heart, lest this which is written come upon thee, lest conscience should lose all its sensibility, and thy day of grace be prematurely closed.

But in every case death approaches, and that dark night inevitably closes and terminates, to all, the day of grace.

2. THE INVALUABLE POSSESSION OF THE DAY OF GRACE.

The text assumes the present possession of the day of grace, when it says, *now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.*

It is the acceptable time—the time of good will, or acceptance. There is a proclamation of pardon to rebels, and the day yet continues for accepting it—there is salvation from eternal ruin and to eternal glory, and to-day this salvation may be obtained.

To the Jews, the time of Christ's ministry was this day; but they rejected him, and he wept over them, and said, *O that thou hadst known, even thou in this thy day the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes.* (Luke xix. 42.) They let the day pass. *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*

When the Apostle wrote to the Corinthians, the

day of grace was extended to the Gentile world; multitudes embraced the gospel, households, towns, cities, countries, and empires, gradually professed Christianity. The Gospel was widely proclaimed; there was a large outpouring of the Spirit, and all the glory of the primitive church.

But brethren, I turn from others, to proclaim in your ears that there is *now* for you an accepted time, and the present is *now* for you a day of salvation. Observe the remarkable repetition of *now*. We have a similar repetition of the word, *To-day*, in Hebrews (iv. 7.) *He limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To-day, after so long a time as it is said, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*

The present time is the only season of which you are sure. Now in this life is the only time you have; the present life is a short reprieve for sinful creatures, a respite from the execution of the sentence upon them, in which they may seek, and obtain deliverance from eternal death, and the blessing of everlasting life. St. Paul does not speak in the future; there is no future day of salvation: no return to earth again. If ever you repent, it must be now; if ever you believe in Christ, it must be now; if ever God convert you and you are converted; if ever God work in you to will and to do of his good pleasure and you *work out your own salvation*, and escape hell, and

win heaven, it must be now. *Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him, lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the Judge, and the Judge deliver thee to the Officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily, I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.* (Matt. v. 25, 26.) O my friends, there is no doing the work of salvation in another world. Heaven and hell have other employments: one to enjoy for ever the completed salvation, and the other for ever to bewail its loss. Now then, whatever may become of your reputation, of your estate, of your liberty, of your family, of your life itself, neglect not the one thing needful, your salvation.

Are you in youth—O my children, O my young friends, think not you are secure beyond a day, even the present day; the Saviour says, *They that seek me early shall find me.*

Are you in middle life, and have health and strength; give all to him who is worthy of all; health and strength are no protection against sickness and death; this may be to you also the only day of salvation.

Are you aged—the day of salvation still remains, it is rapidly departing, grasp hold of Christ ere it be gone for ever.

An affecting incident occurred in our own congregation, which may to our minds give a reality

to all the things of which we have been speaking. A most regular attendant on my ministry, who never missed when he could help it, was at Church on the Sunday, and on the Wednesday in his business; but feeling unwell, he sent for a medical man, who seemed to think with proper care he might live for many years. He took his tea the same evening, and had hardly swallowed it, before he fell back dead. I see him as sitting on that seat before me, where he so regularly attended. He heard the sermons which you have heard; he joined in the prayers in which you have joined; and now he is gone to the reality of what we have so often spoken of,—and soon you and I must follow. But his death tells us with a powerful voice, *now is the day of salvation.*

3. THE ATTENTION WHICH IT DEMANDS.

Behold! Behold!

It is twice repeated, because men neglect it so much—because it is so infinitely important to regard it.

There are many things which ask for our attention, that are not worthy of our thoughts; there are other things valuable in their proportion; but this is supremely and incalculably important. It is nothing less than escaping the greatest of all evils—an evil beyond our highest thoughts ruinous, and attaining the greatest possible good, a good beyond our highest thoughts advantageous.

O if ever attention were needful, it is needful here! *He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.*

Behold it so then, as to turn your eyes from all other objects that would distract and hinder your attention to this your happy season of grace. Let the Saviour have to say of you, *But one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken from her.*

Consider much this rich grace of God; search the Scriptures, that you may see it in all its fulness. Believe firmly all that God says concerning it, and use heartily, and gladly all its treasures for your soul's salvation. To enable you to act thus, you have a blessed Teacher and Comforter, John xiv. 26. Ask for his grace and you shall receive it.

Have any hitherto neglected this great salvation? let me exhort them, with all possible earnestness and affection, to neglect it no longer. Now you have life, the word of God, Sabbaths, sermons, ministers, pious friends, the means of grace, every possible help. You have time to seek God: he is waiting to be gracious, it is a golden opportunity, all things are ready. Never, never will you have a better time, a fitter time, or one more favourable than now, and possibly you may have no other; never again may the same invitation reach your ears: never again the

Spirit soften your heart. O then, *to-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts!* O, to-day receive the grace of God!

But have any known the accepted time, and God working in them; are they *working out their own salvation with fear and trembling?*—Press onward, beloved brethren, for the prize; *He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.* You may have to go through many trials; but all are ordered and regulated for your best good, and whatever may be in the midst of them, God will hear and succour you. You shall find the faithfulness of the declaration—*I have heard thee, and I have succoured thee.* He will keep you so that *none shall pluck you out of his hands.*

SERMON II.

THE DAY OF GRACE.

2 CORINTHIANS, VI. 1, 2.

We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain; for he saith I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee. Behold, now is the accepted time. Behold, now is the day of salvation.

FROM these words I stated my purpose to consider, 1. The grace of God. 2. The season of grace. 3. The giving of grace. 4. The receiving it in vain. 5. The receiving it effectually. We have already considered the first two divisions.

There remain to consider,

3. THE GIVING OF GRACE,
4. THE RECEIVING OE GRACE IN VAIN,
5. THE RECEIVING THIS GRACE EFFECTUALLY.

III. THE GIVING OF GRACE.

We then, as workers together with him.

We have here the instrument used, and the power using it.

THE INSTRUMENT USED—is the ministry of the Gospel. God uses, in infinite condescension, sinful men to be the heralds of his grace, and to convey to their fellow sinners the tidings of his love. *We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God.* This is our proper business, this our high office as God's ministers. In this accepted time we study in hope, we pray in hope, we preach in hope, we labour in hope, if that God by any means, through us, may save your souls. Nor have we any thing that ought so to lie upon our minds as this. How the Apostle speaks to the Galatians, *my little children, of whom I travail in birth until Christ be formed in you.* We know that the time of opportunity is limited and short; we urge upon your attention the only way of salvation; we remind you that the continuance of the day of grace is full of uncertainties; we declare the aggravated guilt of neglecting it, and that, if the Gospel be not *a savour of life unto life*, it is *a savour of death unto death*; we desire *to be instant in season and out of season*, never resting

till we see you safe in the only refuge of sinners, —the grace of God.

We remember also that a day will come when we can no more think of you, and pray for you, visit you, and beseech you to turn to Christ: a day when ministers will be withdrawn from you for ever, and if you have received the grace of God in vain, Satan may give your minister a challenge which he can then neither accept nor answer.—'Do what thou wilt to rescue this or that lost sinner from my grasp; to bring him to repentance and salvation. He is mine, for ever chained in indissoluble bonds, my prey, my lawful captive—yes, for ever.'

Let the voice of the ministry now then reach your ears: *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found.*

And for your encouragement, remember

THE POWER USING THE INSTRUMENT.

Do not think we magnify the instrument. The treasure is unspeakably excellent and precious, but *we have this treasure in earthen vessels*—vessels of no value in themselves, full of defects and weaknesses, soon broken and laid aside—and why is this? *that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.* (2 Cor. iv. 7.)

A divine power attends the feeble ministry of man. To them that are saved *the preaching of the cross is the wisdom of God and the* power of God.

Preaching is the Divine Ordinance in which God is wont to pour out his Holy Spirit. O if you had right views of this ordinance how highly would you esteem—how diligently attend the ministry of the gospel, looking for and expecting the Holy Ghost. This, this is our aim—*not* that our preaching may be *with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:* that as *our sufficiency is of God,* so that sufficiency may be continually seen in turning you from sin, and building you up in your most holy faith. It is his promise, *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power;* O that the power may be put forth even in our ministry to the conversion and salvation of your precious souls.

THE MEASURE GIVEN, is just as it pleases God; to some more, to some less: *To every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.* Just as the gifts of the Spirit are bestowed on each according to the Divine sovereignty, and *all these worketh that one and the self same Spirit dividing to every man severally as he will;* so the graces of the Spirit are according to the gift, freely given of God—*ask and ye shall have.* Be not content with a small measure of grace. O how little, how very little most of us have, and how satisfied we are with that little! Instead of hungering and thirsting for more and more, that grace and peace may be multiplied, we sit down

contented with the truth of grace, when we ought to long for the riches and fulness of grace. Let us apply to him who *giveth liberally and upbraideth not.*

IV. THE RECEIVING THIS GRACE IN VAIN.

The Apostle exhorts the Corinthians not to receive the grace of God in vain. This implies that many hear of, yet never benefit by this grace.

Mark then, 1. The persons who receive this grace in vain; and 2. Their inexcusableness.

1. THE PERSONS WHO RECEIVE THIS GRACE IN VAIN.

There are various and very opposite classes, who, however they may differ in other respects, agree in this, they all receive the grace of God in vain. UNBELIEVERS prefer darkness to light *because their deeds are evil.* Thus the Jews at Antioch, when they saw the Gentiles crowding to hear the word, *were filled with envy and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.* (Acts xiii. 45.) So again in Iconium, *the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.* (Acts xiv. 2.) The Apostle says, *We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Gentiles foolishness.* (1 Cor. i. 23.) The root of this unbelief is

the love of sin, and it is the love of sin therefore which you must especially watch and pray against. O *take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.* (Heb. iii. 12.)

SELF-RIGHTEOUS PERSONS think so well of themselves that they do not see their need of this grace; it may be very proper and suitable they suppose for the wicked, but their goodness will help them, and so they reject the grace that brings salvation—*Going about*, the most impracticable of all attempts that sinful man ever made, *to establish their own righteousness, they submit not themselves to the righteousness of God.*

CARELESS PERSONS also receive the grace of God in vain. They are like the way-side hearer; the the truth comes before them, but it sinks not into the heart: and, as Gallio, they *care for none of these things;* if their temporal interests were affected, they would be all alive, but as it only concerns the soul, they are inattentive, and indifferent, and unconcerned. There are others who may be called TEMPORARY BELIEVERS; in them the seed of the word is sown as on a rock, for a while they believe, but in time of temptation they fall away. There may be great joy and excitement for a season, but it is soon lost, and they become less impressible than ever. WORLDLY MEN in general receive the grace of God in vain;

the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. There are others who are great TALKERS IN RELIGION, they can speak most fluently on religious subjects, speculate about them, dispute for them, and admire them, *they say but do not;* these also receive the grace of God in vain. There are some even WHO PERVERT THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE, and make them an occasion of sin; and *turn the grace of God into licentiousness.*

O my brethren, I cannot but fear that there are now before me persons who under one or other of these descriptions are trifling with or trampling upon the grace of God. Search and try your ways; pray earnestly to God in the words of David, *Examine and prove me, O Lord, look well if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* For consider,

4. THE INEXCUSABLENESS OF THOSE WHO REJECT THIS GRACE.

It is a case of most fearful guilt and danger. Every moment's delay increases the danger, as it shortens the time between them and ruin. If they are spared year after year, through the intercession of the Lord Jesus, yet while they cumber the ground, the last year will soon come, and with it an accumulated load of guilt. Solomon thus describes their state: *Because I have called, and*

ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when destruction and anguish cometh upon you: Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me. (Prov. i. 24—28.) Here too is an alarming aggravation of their misery; they had a day of grace, the proclamation of mercy sounded in their ears; but they rejected all till there was no remedy. Our Lord assures us that *it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment* than for those who had heard and disregarded his gospel. They shall be left *without excuse*, and as the man who had not on the wedding garment was *speechless*, so shall they be without one plea, when they are bound hand and foot, and *cast into outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

Despise not then the riches of the goodness and loving kindness of God: wait on him with all earnestness for a part and share in his salvation, and rest not till this great stake be secure.

Do you ask how you may receive the grace of God effectually, and what is the character of those who do so? we proceed to consider,

V. THE RECEIVING OF THIS GRACE EFFECTUALLY.

The Apostle beseeches them not to receive the grace of God in vain, that is, to receive it effectually, in the season in which it is brought before us.

That we may have a better view of this, we will notice some seasons of receiving grace which you should watch for and improve.

SABBATHS in general are God's seasons—what a mercy it is to have one day entirely set apart for attending to the concerns of our souls. Now *if thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and shalt call the sabbath a Delight, the holy of the Lord, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.* (Isaiah lviii. 13, 14.) Duly observe the sabbath, diligently seek God's grace on his own day, and in his appointed ordinances, and you shall not fail to receive it. O neglect not the sermons which you hear on the sabbath. When the gospel of Christ is faithfully preached, sermons are special seasons of grace. *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;* yes, all the rich

blessings of the gospel are dispensed from Christ in the ministry of his own appointment, and Christians find this. A sermon either makes your heart more hardened by being disregarded, or more softened by being improved. Receive grace then on God's sabbath.

AFFLICTIONS again are seasons of grace. Whether it be sickness in your own person, or in your family and relatives, or losses and trials, or distresses; *afflictions spring not from the dust*, nor does the Lord afflict willingly, for his own pleasure, but *for our profit that we might be partakers of his holiness.* (Heb. xii. 10.) So that all God's servants can say, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes. Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word.* (Psalm cxix. 67, 72.) O then let not the season of affliction pass away without accomplishing God's gracious design of love to your soul. Receive grace in this season of grace.

Times of conviction are also seasons of grace. There are periods in a man's life when he feels, "I am a sinful creature, I am in danger of God's wrath, I must alter my conduct, I must begin anew." Now if while these convictions are lively, he does not quench and resist them, but strive, *according to his working* who *worketh in* us *mightily*, to increase and deepen them, then shall he receive larger and fuller communications

of the Holy Spirit; but if yielding to sin and Satan, he trifles with conviction, and stifles and drowns it by rushing into worldly society, and plunging into the cares and distractions of a sinful world, a season of grace is lost, and the soul becomes more insensible, more unimpressible than before.

But I need not enlarge, since every event, every circumstance of life is to the Christian a season of grace. Just as in the cultivation of a garden, sometimes the gardener digs the ground, sometimes he prunes the trees, sometimes he sows the seed, sometimes he plucks up the weeds, but all is to make the garden beautiful and fruitful: so our God in varied ways deals with our souls, that grace may flourish in us and bring forth fruit to his glory and our everlasting salvation.

Besides these particular directions, there are also some general principles not to be lost sight of by those who would effectually receive the grace of God, or ascertain how far that grace effectually works in themselves.

Need I mention *faith* and *prayer* as indispensable for the receiving and growth of grace?

FAITH must first be exercised. This credits the existence and promise of grace—believes all that God says about it—is *fully persuaded that what he has promised he is able also to perform*, and takes them simply at his word, assured that he would neither mock us nor deceive us. Faith

therefore welcomes, as infallibly true, the declaration of the way of recovery for lost sinners in the gospel, assures herself that God is merciful to man, and that forgiveness, justification, adoption, sanctification, the hope of glory, and eternal life, are placed within her grasp: joyful news, what good tidings of great joy! I see a way of escape; I see the doors of the kingdom of heaven fly open to all believers. I see a reconciled Father, I see a sufficient and complete Saviour, I see a guide and comforter, I see the strait gate, and the narrow way, and, by the grace of God, I will strive to enter in. May you all *obtain* this *precious* gift of *faith*, (2 Peter i. 1,) it will be like another sense to you, far more blessed than hearing or seeing, enabling you to discern the realities and the glories which most of all concern you as immortal beings. *Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound;* they *shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance: in thy name shall they rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.*

PRAYER is the cry of faith; the way in which grace is obtained and increased, and it is founded on our sense of need. Encouraged by the assurance that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, and that he is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, we gladly avail ourselves of the gracious invitation, *Let us there-*

fore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Not boldly only, but earnestly,—you must strive hard in prayer: cold petitions will not do. David says, *my soul followeth* HARD *after God;* that word *hard* is significant and instructive. As the drowning man would cry for help, as Peter cried, *Lord, save or I perish;* so must we cry for grace. O be assured a careless prayer and a heartless wish never yet marked a saved soul. You must wrestle with God in prayer, if you would receive effectual grace. There will be strong cries and tears like our Saviour's. Nothing will content you but God's favour and love, if you are in earnest for it, what you need above all other things is God's grace. Whatever else you get, without this you are miserably poor; whatever else you lose, if you get this you are unspeakably happy. Grace is the seed of glory—grace is the first thing. *The Lord will give grace and* then *glory. Ask and ye shall have, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.* All this shows the earnestness with which you should pray.

Do you further ask how you may know whether you have effectually received grace? I reply, it is marked by LOVE. We love that grace which we have received. We glory in it. We value it above every thing. And surely it is above all price—surely every Christian does desire nothing

so much as the grace of God. If men think it worth while to make their house comfortable where they only dwell a few years; if men think it worth while to lay up treasure on earth for a short life, O is it not, I appeal to your understanding as men, is it not infinitely better worth while, to lay up our treasure where we must dwell for ever, and to have our wealth in a bank that can never break, and with a banker, who has the universe for his possession, and whose favour is better than life itself? The apostles so valued grace that in every epistle they salute the churches with this prayer, *Grace be to you.* While the term grace is offensive and unintelligible to those who receive it in vain, it is precious and delightful to those who receive it effectually. How the Apostle loves to dwell upon it! *God hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness to us through Christ Jesus. For by grace ye are saved.* One sure note of an effectual reception of grace is a supreme value for it. I remember a time, before I knew my sinfulness and danger, being offended with seeing what I then thought so unmeaning a term as grace so often repeated in hymns; but when I felt my true state as a fallen creature, no word was more precious to me than this.

In practically applying the subject, I would solve some fears and address different characters.

I would first SOLVE SOME FEARS that may hinder and retard you in receiving this grace.

Perhaps you are afraid of this world's ridicule. If you become earnest in religion, you will be counted singular, and you cannot bear the laugh of your companions. O it is one of the most wonderful of the blindnesses and obliquities of our fallen nature, that persons wise and sensible in other things, who would not be laughed out of any worldly gain, should in a case so infinitely important, bend to a sneer, and be turned aside by a mere scoff. Be not you laughed out of your sense of religion. Risk not so foolishly your soul. If you are so afraid of ridicule, think what ridicule will be worst at last. If a foolish companion can thus now affect you, how will you bear to be the laughing stock of Satan, and the scorn of all his hosts through eternity? O the inexpressible folly of squandering away in mere earthly business, in vain pleasures, in idleness, in pomp and empty shew, in ambition and the glory of this transitory world, that day of grace in which you might gain solid and everlasting joy and an exceeding and eternal weight of glory!

Perhaps you fear that the day of grace may be past. Do you really fear this? the fear itself is a hopeful sign, and shews that conscience is

not yet seared or past feeling; but O let not the enemy contrive by such a fear to keep you inert and inactive, doing nothing till the day of grace be past.

One more fear may be an impediment to you. You may fear that you are not among God's elect, and therefore it is no use for you to strive. Who can tell you that you are not among his elect; his decree of election is ever secret, till it is happily manifested by our turning to him; not feignedly, but with all the heart. Repent and believe, and you shall assure your election.

Do you fear that you have not repented and believed, and feel that you are unable to do so? Remember that Jesus is exalted to bestow these and all other spiritual blessings upon you, Acts v. 31.

I would in conclusion address different characters—

Have any reason to think that hitherto they have received the grace of God in vain, that they are yet in their sins: O, I beseech you, *look diligently now, lest you fail of the grace of God.* There is no time for farther delay. The Sun of righteousness has been shining for hours in the day of grace, and you have hitherto been fast asleep; *the night cometh when no man can work;* now cry mightily for grace. O let not the sermon you are now hearing find and leave your

heart hardened; but let it be as the awakening voice of the Saviour, leading you effectually to receive his grace.

Have any a besetting sin that entrammels and hampers them. It is the day of grace and gospel liberty. Bring the power of grace against the power of sin, and it shall conquer your mightiest corruption. (Rom. v. 21.) Divine grace shall be sufficient for you. Only *Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.*

Are any backsliding from God, and dishonouring their holy vocation by sinful practices—still we proclaim the day of grace, and say, *Yet return again unto me, saith the Lord; I will heal their backslidings and love them freely. Remember from whence you have fallen, repent and do the first works,* and all shall be blotted out, and you shall yet be blessed and a blessing.

Are there any waiting, in the use of the means of grace, to receive grace. You shall not wait in vain. Let nothing turn you back from patiently waiting on the Lord, and expecting his grace. Do you please God your Saviour, though for this the whole world should be displeased. Let the righteous *hold on his way,* and he *shall be stronger and stronger.* (Job xvii. 9.) In Jesus there is an inexhaustible fulness, and out of that fulness, day by day, you shall *receive grace for grace.*

SERMON III.

ON DEATH.

ECCLESIASTES XII. 7.

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

It becomes a wise man to prepare for any event of importance which he has reason to believe will assuredly take place. Such a preparation is the more suitable and needful, when the event is not only certain and important, but its character becomes materially affected by our previous conduct with reference to it. And it is yet more incumbent to think beforehand, of such an event, if due preparation be attended with immensely beneficial consequences, nay, with nothing less than eternal life and glory. But what tongue can tell the madness of this neglect of prepara-

tion, if, in addition to every thing else, the loss of all that bliss, and the suffering of eternal woe, be the certain consequence of that neglect. Death and judgment, and their issues, hell or heaven, must be regarded as events of this description, and for which preparation is no less reasonable than it is indispensable.

O that I could entertain the hope that all your minds, without exception, were quickened to a realizing view of these momentous events. May the Lord bless the consideration of them now, to your everlasting good.

I begin with bringing before you the subject of death,—that time in reference to which it is said in our text,—*Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.*

Let us consider,

1. THE EVENT REFERRED TO.
2. ITS IMMEDIATE CONSEQUENCES.
3. ITS PRACTICAL USE.

I. THE EVENT REFERRED TO.

Solomon, who had been describing, in highly figurative language, the gradual decay of the body and its dissolution, (Eccles. xii. 1—6.) in our text, brings before us the immediate results of that dissolution. The event then is death; the separation of the soul from the body;—the spirit

leaving its frail tabernacle, and entering on a new and untried state of existence. I would point out its certainty, the uncertainty of the time, its nearness, its just demand on man, its subjugation by the Christian.

1. Its CERTAINTY.

It is not an event which may or may not arrive to us. *What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?* (Psalm lxxxix. 49.) *There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit, neither hath he power in the day of death, and there is no discharge in that war.* (Eccles. viii. 8.) You must certainly die; let this truth, which should influence your whole life, penetrate your whole soul. The scenes which you now behold, you will one day cease to behold; you must bid farewell to every earthly object. You *must* die.

O, surely men in general are ignorant of this! They could not have their hearts so engaged in, and filled with cares for the good things of this world, did they know these are all temporary and transient, and there is certainly one overwhelming event before them, which will for ever separate them from all here below.

2. *The uncertainty* of the time.

Certain as the event itself, it is uncertain as to the time when it shall happen; and this fearfully increases the importance of being prepared for it.

Seventy or eighty years are the farthest ordinary duration of life, but its average length is less than half of seventy. But even thirty years, or one year, or one day, is more than we can be certain will be ours. *Ye know not what shall be on the morrow; for what is your life? it is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.* (James iv. 13, 14.) *Man also knoweth not his time.* (Eccles. ix. 12.) No one living can infallibly tell that his life shall be continued here, even for another day, or another night.—*Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.* (Prov. xxvii. 1.)—*This night thy soul may be required.* (Luke xii. 20.) There are thousands now alive, multitudes of whom are perhaps inwardly fancying,—*Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry,* who have no thought of death as at hand, on whom this very sentence is passed, and will be executed before to-morrow's sun shall rise.

Death may come thus suddenly to some of you! O my brethren, are you prepared for such a summons? *Be ye also ready.*

3. Its NEARNESS.

Do not suppose it is a distant event,—it is at hand, the Judge is at the door. Say rather with Job,—*the graves are ready for me, my days are swifter than a post, they flee away; they are passed*

as the swift ship; or with David, *Behold thou hast made my days as a handbreadth, and mine age is as nothing before thee; verily, every man living, at his best estate, is altogether vanity.* (Psalm xxxix. 5.) Only a thin veil of flesh hides the eternal world from your view. Any moment may rend it asunder. You can hardly mention the situation in which some one person or other has not died, or the circumstance in which some have not been called to appear before God.—If such an event be so near, how ready ought we to be! *Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house cometh; at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.*

4. ITS JUST DEMAND ON MAN.

This is the most fearful characteristic of death. It is the issue of sin. It is not a mere change from one state to another, but it is the Divine appointment in consequence of man's disobedience. *It is appointed unto men once to die.* Death is *the wages of sin.* It is the punishment of guilt. *The soul that sinneth, it shall die. By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* (Romans v. 12.) The Law justly condemns the transgressors; and its fearful penalty is death. Here is *the sting of death.* Were we not sinners, death would have no terrors. But now he is *the*

King of Terrors; bringing along with him, *a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries.* Awful indeed is it for a sinful creature to fall into the hands of the living God, and under the immediate wrath of Him who says, *Vengeance belongeth unto me.* This is the death of death. Are we provided against this evil? All defence and security against other evils, while this tremendous evil is disregarded, is but mere vanity and childish folly. God himself is described as tenderly expostulating with him on this subject. *O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.* (Deut. xxxii.)

5. THE SUBJUGATION OF DEATH BY THE BELIEVER.

There is a full victory to be obtained over this mighty enemy, the great conqueror of the human race. But to attain this victory, none less than the only Son of God entered into the conflict. He became partaker of our flesh and blood, and yielded himself to death, *that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil, and deliver those, who through fear of death, were all their life time subject to bondage.* (Heb. ii. 14, 15.) On his cross he spoiled this *principality of power.* (Col. ii. 15.) He has gone before us through the dark tomb; he knows its innermost recesses, and so complete is the victory,

that the Apostle says, *He hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.* (2 Timothy i. 10.) Now the believer in Him may defy this his greatest and last foe, and say, *Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Were you all, my brethren, true believers in the Lord Jesus, death would be the happiest subject on which I could address you. This victory would be yours. May the precious gift of faith be bestowed from above upon you all. Remember the solemn assurance of our Lord Christ: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life.* (John v. 51.)

Can I, as your minister, look at this victory without longing that you should all be among the victors. It is my fervent prayer to God for you, that you may all partake of this victory; that you may all share this triumph. God, in mercy, grant it for his Son's sake!

Such then is death, the event referred to; it is certain to all, it is uncertain as to the time, but it is near at hand, and the justly deserved penalty of sin, and the believer obtains a full victory over it.

We proceed to consider,

II. THE IMMEDIATE CONSEQUENCES OF DEATH.

The dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

The consequences here specified are two: according to the distinct parts of man, his body and his soul. There is the decay of the body in the dust, and the return of the soul to God.

1. THE DECAY OF THE BODY IN THE DUST.

The body was originally dust. *The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground.* (Genesis ii. 7.) It teaches us a humbling and a profitable lesson. Man's body was not formed of any thing so valuable and solid as gold or silver; it was not formed of any thing so hard and durable even as iron or stone; dust, the least valuable of this earth's materials, that which is frailest and soonest dissipated, was used by our Divine Creator. His infinite wisdom and his almighty power, moulded and fashioned the most unlikely of all materials, the very dust on which we tread, into the fair proportion, and beauty, and comeliness of the human form. Learn the wisdom of God, learn the nothingness of man.

But this beauty of man soon passes away. *All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, the*

flower fadeth. (Isaiah xl. 6, 7.) *The grace of the fashion of it perisheth.* (James i. 10.) Never forget, my dear brethren, that you are sustained from day to day, and from hour to hour, simply by divine power. Your life is entirely dependant on the continued support of that Almighty Being by whom you were first made. Any thing that God commissions is powerful enough to cause your immediate death. *We dwell,* says Job, *in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth.* (Job iv. 19.) Not before the elephant or the lion, the tiger or the bear, merely, not before that which is strong, powerful, but before the feeblest insect, that which itself can hardly be touched without being crushed; when it is commissioned by God, we are even crushed. God has but to remove his hand from under us, and we fall into the dust. *Thou takest away their breath, they die and return to their dust.* (Psalm civ. 29.)

This is according to that original sentence pronounced on man's first transgression, *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the ground: for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.* (Genesis iii. 19.) Where are the bodies of all the millions that have peopled our earth? they are mingled with the dust on which those now living are moving and treading. Where are

the myriads that have inhabited this busy and crowded metropolis from century to century; they are mouldering in the dust, and they are mingled with the earth. Once the eye glistened with joy and delight, once the ear was ravished with music, once the tongue was eloquent to speak, the hands powerful to labour, and the feet swift to run. Once the social circle was delighted with the mirth of the child, or cheered by the love of the mother, or instructed by the wisdom of the father, or directed by the counsel, and gladdened with the face of the friend: but all is now silent in the grave: or if the inhabitant have an expressive language, Christian language is this, *The grave is mine house, I have made my bed in darkness; I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister.* (Job xvii. 13, 14.) Here, my brethren, you and I must certainly be carried, here is *the house appointed for all living.* Our dust will soon be mingled with the earth, till that day when the Almighty God who first created us, shall by his powerful voice re-collect the scattered particles, reform our frame, revivify the dust, recall its inhabitant, the immortal spirit, and raise us up to the judgment of the great day.

Are these things so? You know they are. My brethren, let us not then spend all our care on the perishing body. Still less, abuse this doctrine

of human mortality to vain pleasure, saying, *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. Be not* thus *deceived.* Death may be changed from a curse to a blessing. You may, on Christian principles, find death lose all its sting, and be the very gate to life and glory. Fly to Jesus Christ, believe in him, *hear his saying*, and you *shall not taste of death.* (John viii. 51, 52.)

May our God raise you all to the high hopes and the full joy of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ!

SERMON IV.

ON DEATH.

ECCLESIASTES XII. 7.

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

We proposed to consider from these words, 1. The event referred to; 2. The consequences of that event; and, 3. Its practical use. We have already considered, The event referred to, Death, under five views:—its certainty to all, its uncertainty as to the time, its nearness, its just demand on man, and its subjugation by the Christian. We have also entered on the consideration of the consequences of that event as two-fold; the return of the body to the dust, (which was explained in the last sermon) and the return of the soul to God.

We proceed to consider,

2. THE RETURN OF THE SOUL TO GOD.

The spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

You observe here a marked distinction in the account of the body and the soul; the body is dissolved and mingled with the earth from which it was taken; the spirit lives and returns to the living God who gave it. There is no sleep of the soul. The moment it is unclothed by the putting off the body, that moment it appears before the God of the spirits of all flesh. (2 Cor. v. 4—6.) The apostle's statement is decisive; he speaks of his *desire to depart and be with Christ, which,* he says, *is far better;* far better than living on earth, even though he could say, *To me to live is Christ,* and amidst all the scenes of usefulness and the spiritual joys which he had here below.

When God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, he received a living soul, an immaterial and immortal spirit, which shall never cease to exist. Here is the true grandeur of man. It is not the king's palace or the king's throne; it is not earthly wisdom, or talents, or riches, that constitute man's nobility and glory. Every babe in its mother's arms, every peasant in his cottage of clay, every poor heathen idolater, every savage roaming through the woods, has, lodged in his bosom, that which is of more value than worlds upon worlds—even an immortal soul. He has that within which is indestructible and imperish-

able. You cannot put a period to its existence: men may *kill the body, but after that they have no more that they can do;* they cannot destroy the soul. Your soul lives, and shall live for ever.

Mark then the course of the soul after death. Immediately on the death of the body the soul appears before God—solitary, unaccompanied by any earthly attendants; the master without his servants, and the servant without his master; the husband without his wife, and the wife without the husband; the parent without the child, and the child without the parent. Alone, and at the gate of death, stripped of all earthly titles and distinctions, and bared of all riches, tenements, and possessions, just as *we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out:* (1 Tim. vi. 7.) so, by itself, the spirit enters the eternal world, and sees God face to face.

God, that has been so little in man's thoughts, now appears to the soul in all his unutterable purity, and majesty, and glory.—God is now every thing to the soul: all other beings are lost in the brightness of his presence; and now first man beholds *him as he is*—so holy that he charges the angels with folly, so pure that the heavens are not clean in his sight, so lovely and resplendent that the eye of the believer gazes with unceasing delight on his beauty. (Psalm xxvii. 4. Isaiah xxxiii. 7.)

When the spirit thus returns to God, an immediate sentence goes forth, deciding its condition for ever. There are two, and but two distinct abodes for the spirit, in the regions of the departed, abodes in which each must dwell till the general resurrection of all flesh at the last day.

There is THE ABODE OF THE LOST; there are *the spirits in prison*, (1 Peter iii. 19,) along with *the angels that sinned, cast down into hell, and delivered into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment*, (2 Peter ii. 4.) When the soul of the wicked leaves its body, and has received sentence from God, it is immediately consigned to the regions of woe. When the rich man was buried, his soul was directly in the place of misery, and *in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment*, longing for Lazarus even to *dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool* his *tongue, for* he was *tormented in* that *flame*. O tremendous abode—all hope for ever gone; the blackness of darkness surrounding them on every side; *the face of him that sitteth on the throne* frowning upon them, and *the wrath of the Lamb* over them through eternity! O flee from this wrath to come; and may God, in tender mercy, give you to know the things which belong to your everlasting peace!

There is, however, blessed for ever be our God, another abode, THE ABODE OF THE RIGHTEOUS, in which their spirits dwell till their bodies shall

be raised from the grave. On leaving their bodies, their spirits are received and are welcomed by the Lord Jesus our Saviour; him they at length behold face to face; they see his glory which he had with the Father, before the world was; they have sweet access to God as a loving Father, and full communion with him; they dwell in the heavenly Jerusalem, amid the innumerable company of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect. Thus Stephen prays, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;* thus Paul desired to be *present with the Lord;* thus Lazarus was *carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom;* and thus the penitent thief was assured, *To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.* In those blessed regions, they *sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven,* free from every sorrow and temptation, from every fear and anxiety, from every want and every care; they rejoice in the Saviour's presence and love, waiting for the accomplishment of the number of God's elect, and the final triumph of the resurrection-day, and the consummation of bliss, both in body and soul.

O blissful state! Would to God you may all arrive there! O may we sacrifice every thing for this; may we help each other to gain it! Let us beware of throwing any hinderances in the way of each other. My beloved people, O that I may meet you there! *My joy and crown*

will be your possession of this *exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

III. THE PRACTICAL USE OF THE SUBJECT.

1. LEARN THE EVIL OF DEATH TO THE WICKED.

What tongue can describe, what heart can imagine all the unutterable evils comprehended in this one word, death, as it regards the wicked! That which is seen is painful, the weeping friends around the bed, the bodily suffering, the gasping breath, the groans and distress, and expiring sighs, the breathless pallid corpse, the coffin, the funeral procession, the dark grave, and the mouldering body;—but all this is but the shadow of death. That which is unseen is death's substance; sin and God's wrath against the sinner; the immediate presence of the offended Judge, and the irremediable consequences which follow. Remember, oh! remember, death is a certain event, it must overtake you. You cannot by all possible contrivances guard against its approach; all the gold of Mexico or Peru, all the skill of the ablest physicians, all the care and tenderness of the most beloved friends, all the efforts of forecast and providence cannot turn away death. He laughs at all human contrivances, and with steady step proceeds onward conquering all. You may imagine a security, but the Bible says, *Your cove-*

nant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand. Remember, oh! remember, death brings you into the presence of your Creator. However you may have managed to shut out the thoughts of God, however you may have shunned his presence, and have lived as without God in the world, then you must appear before his searching eye, and be under his immediate hand. Remember, oh! remember, death decides your state for eternity. *There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.* (Eccles. ix. 10.) *In the place where the tree falleth, there shall it be.* (Eccles. xi. 3.) In that world the saying shall be realized, *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still.* (Rev. xxii. 11.) Between the abodes of the righteous and the wicked, there is an impassable space, *a great gulf fixed,* which neither righteous nor wicked can pass over. Remember, then, oh! remember, that at death the wicked begin an eternity of woe. What evil can be compared with this—say you lose every thing for religion, you forfeit situation, friends, health, life itself: O happy oss, if you may but escape the bitter pains of eternal death. Lord, let not our eyes any longer be blinded by Satan, enable us to see our danger! awake, poor sinner, awake! open, O Lord, open thou the eyes of sinners, even of

some sinners now in thy presence, and awaken them from the sleep of sin!

O my brethren, a time is coming which will awaken you, when death comes you will be roused, and cry out for a little longer space, and hell will be seen to be a real and tremendous evil. Believe me, it is now the same evil as it will be seen to be on your death-bed, only with this blessed difference: you have now time to escape the evil, and to attain security for ever. O redeem time for your soul's salvation! Linger no more. *Let the wicked* at once *forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* (Isa. lv. 7.)

2. Learn THE BLESSEDNESS OF DEATH TO THE BELIEVER.

In truth, in the evil sense, the believer never dies. Our Saviour Christ says, *Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.* (John xi. 26.) *If a man keep my saying he shall never see death.* All that is evil in death, is by Christ so removed, that the believer may say, *Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.* As it regards the body, if it be for a moment an enemy, it is the last enemy, and will assuredly at length be utterly destroyed. Christ has also the keys of death, and can, and does set at liberty all its captives. And as it regards the soul, death

is our best friend; it is equally with life itself numbered among the Christian privileges—*whether life or death, all are your's*—it is a dark door, *the shadow of death*, but the darkness is on this side and not on the other; when it opens, it introduces us to light, and life, and glory, and shuts out for ever all darkness and misery. It is the end of trial and temptation; no more conflicts nor warfare; no more sins nor sorrows can harass and injure the happy believer. He is shut in by death from the world of death, and brought by this his last enemy safe into the mansions of endless life. The scriptures lift up the veil that hides the eternal world, and shews us the angels waiting round the pillow of the dying believer, longing to have another happy spirit added to them: the scriptures shew the Christian, that, to him this is the land of darkness and tears; and the unseen world, the true land of light and joy; *in thy presence is fulness of joy.* May we have but a good hope through grace of this happiness, and we shall long, not for life, but for death, (Phil. i. 23.) and say with David, *My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?* (Psalm xlii. 2.)

3. Learn THE IMPORTANCE OF PREPARATION FOR DEATH.

It is not a speculative subject we have now brought before you. It is not a vain thing. It

deeply and intimately concerns you. It will add much to your comfort here to be delivered from the bondage of the fear of death, and what a glorious truth, you may be delivered from all fear of death; you may be safe from those never-ending evils, and be a partaker of that never-ending felicity to which it introduces God's servants. I repeat again and again, you *must* die; however young, or wise, or strong, or powerful, you *must* die. Secure then a better life. Like Noah, enter the refuge. He *being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.* (Heb. xi. 7.) O let Christ be your refuge. Remember, that preparation for death is not a work to be done in a little time. A whole life ought to be devoted to it, but people defer to the last dregs of life that great work of life which requires all our energies and powers. Here is the great artifice of Satan; he prevails on men to put off till it be too late, the great work of preparation. *They say Peace and safety, till sudden destruction comes, and they cannot escape.* The longer you defer this work, the greater and more arduous you will find it to be, the less strength you will have for it, and the more your bodily infirmities will disable you. Now, even *now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.*

Do you ask how you are to prepare for death?

O fly without delay to Christ Jesus, the only Deliverer from death, the only Conqueror over death! He says, *I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.* (John xi. 25.) Now, your sins may be all washed away in his blood; now, your souls may be covered with the spotless and glorious robe of his righteousness; now, his Spirit will make you meet for the heavenly inheritance. O apply, I beseech you, apply this very day to him! *Before you give sleep to your eyes or slumber to your eyelids,* seek your Saviour *while he may be found, call upon him while he is near. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life,* (1 John v. 12,) *but the wrath of God abideth on him.* (John v. 36.) Here is your first and chief preparation for death, to *win Christ and be found in him.*

But besides the title to heaven there is a meetness, a state of actual readiness which well becomes the Christian, that death may never take him by surprise. The wise virgins slumbered and slept. But *the children of the light, and the children of the day,* should not slumber. *Therefore let us not sleep as do others, but watch and be sober.* Christians, *let your lights be burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord.— Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching.* Meditate, often, there-

fore, on death. Even regard it as one of your blessings; *putting on the breast-plate of faith and love, and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.*

SERMON V.

ON THE RESURRECTION.

JOHN V. 28, 29.

The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.

Our blessed Lord here distinctly declares the doctrine of the resurrection of the body; to the righteous a most cheering and joyful truth. Those who have wept over the lifeless corpse of a departed saint, and have followed with bitter anguish the funeral bier to the grave, and have seen the coffin which contained all that remained of this beloved friend deposited in the silent grave, and have thought of it as lost, and almost lost for ever, may lift up their heads. That body

is the sacred dust of him who believed in Jesus, and which the Divine Spirit once inhabited: it is not dead, it only sleeps in the Lord, and shall revive again with new beauty and freshness, fashioned like to his glorious body, *according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself.* (Phil. iii. 21.)

The doctrine of the resurrection is eminently essential and fundamental. When some among the Corinthians denied this doctrine, the Apostle urgently pressed its importance: *How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead,* (1 Cor. xv. 12)—and alluding to the many sufferings of the first Christians, he tells them, *if in this life only, we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable,* (1 Cor. xv. 19); and assures them, *But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept.* (1 Cor. xv. 20.)

May your minds then, my brethren, be well established in this truth. It is Satan's great aim to weaken our faith, and to obscure our view of the resurrection. Because we see it not, and there seem apparent hinderances from the decay of the body, sinful man easily persuades himself that there will be no resurrection, and even Christians are often deprived of the comfort and advantage they might possess, were their faith on this momentous subject more clear and distinct.

We will consider,

1. THE RESURRECTION ITSELF,
2. ITS CERTAIN APPROACH,
3. ITS UNIVERSAL EXTENT,
4. ITS DECISIVE RESULTS,
5. ITS PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT.

I. THE RESURRECTION ITSELF.

They *that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth.*

We notice the body raised, the voice calling it forth, the coming forth.

1. THE BODY RAISED.

Our Lord is here speaking of the resurrection of the body. Properly speaking the soul never dies; it is the body only that is mingled with the dust, and laid in the grave, and the same body shall be raised. If it were another body, it would not be a resurrection but a new creation. Job's testimony on this point is very clear. *Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold and not another.* (Job xix. 26.) Our identical body, once laid in the grave, shall be raised up. The souls of the wicked are in present torment; a torment that has a fearful expectation of the future, and a torment that will be amazingly aggravated, when the body in which they sinned shall rise

again, with all the tremendous recollection and revival of past sins, to be the inlet of a sorer punishment, to be reunited to the soul, for the final condemnation of both. O may you all be delivered from this woe!

The souls of the righteous are on the other hand in present blessedness, with a joyful anticipation of an increased bliss. They are described as *absent from the body and present with the Lord.* (2 Cor. v. 6.) Our Lord, from that declaration of God to Moses, long after the death of the Patriarchs, *I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,* (Matt. xxii. 32,) takes occasion to shew that they were then living, for *he is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living, for all live to him;* and seeing that he is the God not merely of the soul, but of the whole person, he also shews from the same passage *the resurrection of the dead,* and therefore that the body shall be raised from its state of death. Incalculably will their joy be enhanced when their poor vile body, ransomed from the power of the grave, and redeemed from death, shall be raised incorruptible and glorious, with every capacity to serve God perfectly and for ever. May you all enter into this joy!

2. THE VOICE CALLING IT FORTH:—

Shall hear his voice.

The resurrection of the body seems to be

attended with some apparently insurmountable difficulties. Some bodies have been consumed to ashes, and the ashes scattered over the surface of the earth. Others have been devoured by wild beasts, and have become a part of their substance, and others again have been the food of their fellow men. From these difficulties, the Sadducees of old denied the resurrection of the dead. Like modern infidels they insinuate impossibilities against clear revelation. Our Saviour meets all such cavils, *Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.* (Matt. xxii. 29.) We assert then from the word of God that the same body shall rise again. How is this possible? To man even an adequate conception is impossible. But look at what calls them forth—the voice of Christ, the voice of the Son of God, the voice of the Creator of all things, the voice of *God over all blessed for ever.* (Rom. ix. 5.) That voice said, *Let there be light, and there was light.* (Gen. i. 3.) That voice said, *Let the earth bring forth the living creature—and it was so.* (Gen. i. 24.) That voice said, *Let us make man,* and *man was created.* (Gen. i. 26.) Oh, the unutterable power of that Divine Redeemer whom an unbelieving world slights, scoffs at, and scorns! It will not be so in that great day, but as when at the tomb of Lazarus, the voice, *Lazarus, come forth,* (John xi. 43,) penetrated every bone, every muscle, and

every nerve of the decaying body, *and he that was dead came forth*, so when *the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel and with the trump of God*—proclaiming, "All ye that are in the graves, come forth;" the energy of that voice will break through every obstacle, search the inmost recesses of every receptacle of the dead, bring together every part, and reanimate the whole; not one grave shall retain its tenant, or refuse obedience to the almighty and all-pervading summons.

Talk any of difficulties? all creation furnishes you with emblems and illustrations. Every fresh day, with its new light and heat and varied blessings is a resurrection from the darkness of the night. Every verdant spring, with all its freshness and life and luxuriance, is a resurrection from the frost, the torpor and the death of winter. Every harvest which we see waving in the fields is a resurrection of the seed corn buried, dead, and quickened again. Innumerable insects floating in the air, were once apparently inanimate substances, but they have risen again to life and activity. It is idle to talk of difficulties to him to whom nothing is impossible; and why, it may well be asked, "why should it be thought incredible that God should raise the dead," whose word has assured us that he will? If a watchmaker can take a watch to pieces, and again put

together the parts as they lie before him, the Creator of all may well reconstruct the human frame which by death he has for a season separated, and the parts of which, wherever they are, all lie before him.

O brethren, what a shout will that be which reechoes through creation, and reaches and rouses the slumbering dust! How will it sound to us? Will it be a voice full of woe, or a voice full of joy? it depends on your present state. O fly to Christ now, confess him now, if you would hear that sound without alarm; if you would welcome that voice as a voice of joy.

3. THE COMING FORTH.

We have an emblematical representation of this in the valley which was full of bones: (Ezek. xxxvii. 1—10,) these at the word of the Lord came together, and the sinews and the flesh were brought upon them, and the breath came into them, and they lived an exceeding great army.

But it is not one valley, but every place shall give up the dead there contained. In Daniel it is asserted, *They that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.* (Dan. xii. 2.) In the description of that day it is said, (Rev. xx. 13,) *The sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them.*

Curiosity may here ask a thousand questions; *how are the dead raised up, and with what body do*

they come. (1 Cor. xv. 35.) We cannot go a single step beyond the Scriptures, and the Bible was not written to satisfy mere curiosity, but to make us wise unto salvation. Oh, how joyful will be the resurrection of the righteous! *The dead in Christ shall rise first,* (1 Thess. iv. 16. 1 Cor. xv. 23.) and those then living on the earth, who believe in his name, *shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air.* They will all come forth perfectly distinct and distinguishable: *we shall know as we are known.* If we are to *sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven,* (Matt. viii. 11.) we shall know those blessed saints. When the Apostle says, the Thessalonians were to be his *hope, joy, and crown of rejoicing,* (Matt. ii. 19.) he manifestly implies that he should know them. All our faculties will rather be infinitely improved and heightened, than diminished; as there is a difference between the child and the man, so will there be a vast superiority in our capacity and knowledge, and the coming forth of the righteous will be as the rising of the sun in the morning, full of beauty, and full of glory, rejoicing to run his course.

But O how fearful will be the coming forth of the wicked! Imagine that day then in which they come forth; suddenly awakened out of the sleep of death, amidst the crumbling world, the

heavens departing as a scroll when it is rolled together, the mountains and islands moving out of their places, the elements melting with fervent heat; the wicked are affected by one thing more than all these convulsions of worlds, they dread more than all *the face of him that sitteth on the throne*, and *the wrath of the Lamb:* (Rev. vi. 16.) and they cry to the moving rocks and mountains, Fall on us and hide us.

Brethren, you and I must be in the number then raised. The Lord grant it may be among the righteous, and not among the wicked!

II. ITS CERTAIN APPROACH.

The hour is coming, it is fixed, it will be sudden and unavoidable.

1. IT IS FIXED.

God has fixed a precise and particular day. *He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness.* (Acts xvii. 31.) Nay, the hour is determined, as our Lord declares, *the hour is coming.* But though fixed, God has not revealed it, and therefore the precise time is not known to any created being; nor was the mediator commissioned to reveal it to man; *That day and that hour knoweth no man, no, nor the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.* (Mark xiii. 32.) As the hour of his death is unknown to each individual, so the hour of the

general resurrection is unknown to any part of created beings. This is for many important ends; and the practical lessons are, to take heed not to be *overcharged with the pleasures and cares of this life*, (Luke xxi. 34.) but ever to be watchful and prayerful. Brethren, every day that passes along, every hour that hastens away, every pulse that beats within you, shortens the distance between you and this great and last scene. There is no hindering its advance. You may sooner stop the sun in its progress across the circuit of the sky, than delay the approach of this fixed hour.

2. The hour will be also SUDDEN.

It is frequently compared in the Scriptures to the coming of a thief. If the master *of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.* (Matt. xxiv. 43.) *Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.* (1 Thess. v. 2, and 2 Peter iii. 10, 11.) Hence its coming will be sudden and unexpected. The mass of mankind will be living and acting just as they do now, giving their minds wholly to worldly things, (Matt. xxiv. 37.) and thinking of nothing less than of the resurrection day. In the parable of the virgins it is said, *At midnight there was a cry made, Behold the Bridegroom cometh!* Midnight is the hour when men are wrapped up in darkness and

slumber, and wholly unthinking of danger. O brethren, often place yourselves in the situation in which men will then be placed. Think within yourselves, "what would be my feelings if the trumpet were now to sound, if the great shout were now to be heard, if the heavens were now to roll away, and the great white throne now to appear! am I ready? Is the judge my friend?"

3. The hour will be UNAVOIDABLE.

No skill or wisdom of man, no human eloquence can turn it aside: no riches can bribe a delay; no combined strength of armies or of nations can retard it, and no infidelity hinder its approach. As all the army of Pharoah could not stop the returning waves of the Red Sea; as all the multitudes of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah could not restrain the fire from heaven; as the inhabitants of the whole earth, with all their unbelief and their multitude, could not stay the waters of the deluge, so impossible will it be for men to restrain the progress of that hour, *in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and in which the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.* O brethren, seeing this, *what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.* I confess when I look at these things, I feel more especially my own sinful negligence and coldness. O that I were myself

more alive to them, then I should be more likely to quicken you? Brethren, we are mutually concerned in this all-important hour; let us quicken each other to a more anxious care of the soul, that this day may not find us unprepared. As your minister, I entreat your prayers, that I myself, realizing these truths, may speak more fervently and more according to their unspeakable magnitude, and you may thus be more stirred up to seek the true refuge.

III. ITS UNIVERSAL EXTENT.

ALL *that are in the graves.*

It might have afforded some hope to the wicked, if only the just were to have been raised at the last: though the expectation of being entirely reduced to nothing, as if we had never been, is in itself most gloomy and miserable: but there is not the refuge of even such an expectation. The scriptures are clear that all the dead shall rise again: it is intimated in the declaration in Daniel, they *that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.* (Dan. xii. 2.) St. Paul clearly asserts, *that there shall be a resurrection of the dead. both of the just and unjust.* (Acts xxiv. 15.) Our Lord assures us, *all that are in the graves shall come forth.* In the account of the last judgment, we find, that *before him shall be gathered all nations,*—

the wicked as well as the righteous. The Apostle tells the Romans, *We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.* (Rom. xiv. 10.) and he assures the Corinthians more in detail, *We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* (2 Cor. v. 10,) Thus plain and decisive are the scriptures, as to the universality of the resurrection.

It comprehends, therefore, all ages: from him who has lived the most lengthened period, to the youngest babe; all shall rise again from the grave. Have you, my children, lost an aged Christian father or mother? There you shall meet them again; and if you follow their faith and patience, meet them at the Saviour's right hand. Have you, Christian parents, lost your babes? You shall then reeover them, and out of the mouths of those *babes, God will perfect praise.* All ranks and classes shall then be raised —kings and princes, nobles and men of wealth; not indeed with their worldly distinctions, but they shall rise equally with the poor and needy. Statesmen, not at the head of empires,; and generals of armies, not with collections of armed men at their command; but individually to appear before God. The Apostle John having beheld that scene in prophetic vision, says of it,

I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. (Rev. xx. 12.)

O brethren, methinks the universality of our death and resurrection should much endear us to each other. Those who have been in one common war, and have shared in one victory, love each other as fellow-soldiers; those who have been wrecked in one storm, and saved in one life-boat, love each other as fellow-sailors: and shall not we, who have to pass through the deep valley of the shadow of death, and have all to hear the trumpet sound, and have all to be raised again from the graves—shall not we, as fellow-travellers in the same pilgrimage, love one another fervently, and with a pure heart?

But I forbear the further consideration of this subject till the evening.

SERMON VI.

ON THE RESURRECTION.

JOHN V. 28, 29.

The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

We this morning proposed to consider five points from this text:—1. The resurrection itself; 2. Its certain approach; 3. Its universal extent; 4. Its decisive results; 5. Its practical improvement. Three of these have been explained. In considering the resurrection itself, we noticed, The body raised, The voice calling it forth, and The coming forth. In considering its approach, we shewed that it was fixed, and would be sudden

and unavoidable: and then explained its universal extent. We have now to consider,

4. ITS DECISIVE RESULTS,

5. ITS PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT.

IV. ITS DECISIVE RESULTS.

They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

We notice, the characters described, and the division made.

1. THE CHARACTERS DESCRIBED. They are two-fold—the good and the evil.

There are multitudes of distinctions here; high and low, rich and poor, young and old, learned and unlearned: there are multitudes of characters; the proud and the abject, the sober and respectable, the moral and the decent, the formalist and the sincere, the scorner and the serious, the believer and the unbeliever; but they are all arranged under two classes hereafter, and classes which have no reference to their worldly situation, or to their outward appearance before men; but to their true character in the sight of God.

One character is marked by this—*the doers of good.*

Naturally man is selfish, and aims only at his own aggrandizement, or pleasure, or advantage; but when he is truly converted to God, brought

to see his danger through sin, his guilt before God, and his just desert; when he is further brought to see his salvation by grace through faith; then, that deeply extended, that strong and multiplied root of selfishness, is shaken to its farthest ramifications, and it shall finally be altogether uprooted. He is made a new creature in Christ Jesus. Gratitude becomes the constraining principle of action, his faith works by love, and the great aim of his life is to do good. (Eph. ii. 8.) Though we *are saved by grace through faith*, and that *not of works, lest any man should boast*, yet is this salvation ever seen by good works as its inseparable fruit; they are not the cause, but the effect of salvation; they are not the condition, but the part—the essential part of salvation. We *are the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.* (Eph. ii. 10.) The Christian, like his Saviour, is a man going about doing good; this is his daily life and business, and he seeks to fill every hour with good works.

O let me exhort you to be doers of good; whatever your situation be, aim at this—to do good. You cannot do too much of that which is really good before God and man; let none of your talents be laid up unimproved; lay out time, and knowledge, and strength, and property, and all you have, to do good.

Another character is marked by this—*doers of evil.*

And here we must distinguish between what God reckons evil, and what man reckons evil; for very often *that which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God.* (Luke xvi. 15.) This is the case with all the works of unconverted men. In the language of the Thirteenth Article of the Church of England, "Works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God.... yea, rather for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin." This may serve to undeceive your hearts, who are trusting in your own goodness. All your actions, when perfectly right before man, may be fearfully wrong before God; before man, your character may be unimpeachable, and your actions upright and benevolent; in human society you may be a noble and praiseworthy character—and yet, before God, a doer of evil. That is good in the sight of God, which springs from faith in him and love to him; but if you have not obeyed the command to believe in the Lord Jesus: if, in what you do, you have no eye to the glory of God, no regard to his will, no care to please him; if self be the real end of all your actions, then is your life full of evil in his sight, then is all the guilt of unpardoned sin

upon you; then will you rise at the last day, Oh! I speak it in pain, but I speak it in faithfulness and love, you will rise at the last day among the doers of evil.

May the Divine Spirit now speak powerfully in your consciences, and unmask you to yourselves, and lead you to see your true state; that ere it be too late, and the lamp of life expire, you may know and follow what belongs to your peace!

We proceed to consider, THE DIVISION MADE.

This is two-fold also, according to the two characters. We notice,

1st. THE RESURRECTION OF DAMNATION.

The doers of evil are brought before the awful and all-penetrating eye of the great Judge of all. That glorious Being wearing our form, was mocked and despised, and the evil-doers still despise his name and slight his grace; but what words can utter the horrors included in this description—the resurrection of damnation, when they are brought before the once despised but now glorious Emmanuel! As the body is raised, all the sins that every member of that body has committed, will be manifested. All the false and angry and proud words that the tongue has spoken, all the evil ways in which the feet have walked, all the sinful converse to which the ear has listened, all the wicked works that the hands

have done, will then be exhibited before an assembled world, in the very resurrection of sinful men. Gladly would the soul escape from the accursed re-union with the body in which it sinned. The suicide, in his madness to escape a temporary evil, rushes on an eternal evil: but vain is the attempt to escape in this resurrection; there is no possibility of destroying our existence in that world; not one suicide can take that life away. Their bodies are raised incorruptible; but this only embitters the woe to which they rise. Their understandings then will be cleared to discern the folly of sin, and the truth of God's word; there will not be one infidel at the resurrection of damnation: this again heightens their woe. The commission of some sins also may cease; they cannot cheat, they cannot get drunk, they cannot be licentious: but while the power of gratification is gone, the love of sin remains, as a worm that never dies. Yet all this is but the beginning of sorrows: the fearful word, damnation, exposes to our view another evil, beyond conception tremendous—the wrath of God, his curse, the terrors of the Lord: and this their portion for ever!

My beloved people, these are the solemn truths of God's word. I believe them from my heart; and can I believe them, and think that any of you are exposed to this greatest of all possible dan-

gers, and not warn you, and exhort you, and entreat you to have pity on yourselves, and hasten your escape from the coming storm?

But there is another scene! O, I rejoice to bring it before you. Would to God you might all attain that better resurrection!

THE RESURRECTION OF LIFE.

This resurrection to life is all in Christ. *When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory—if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.* (Col. iii. 4.) Our union with Christ here, is the root of our rising to life hereafter. The apostle dwells at length on this subject in the xvth chapter of 1 Corinthians, as on a theme in which his heart was at home. He says, shewing the origin of our resurrection, *In Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming....* (2 Cor. xv. 22, 23.) *There are celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiri-*

tual body....(2 Cor. xv. 40—44.) *We shall all be changed; for this corruptible must put on incorruption, this mortal must put on immortality; and then*, and not till then fully, *shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.* (2 Cor. xv. 53, 54.) There is much here that we cannot comprehend; it is a glory like that of the sun, the very brightness of which dazzles and blinds. A spiritual body seems to unite opposite natures, and to contradict all our notions; but *flesh, and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.* (1 Cor. 15, 50.) Unspeakable then, inconceivably glorious will be the human frame. The glorious body of Christ as transfigured on the Mount, seems the fullest representation of the risen body of his people.—*His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light:* (Matt. xvii. 2.) so also *shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.*—(Matt. xiii. 34.) *They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars, for ever and ever.* (Dan. xii. 3.)

O! surpassing glory! when all the righteous are assembled above, and these myriads of suns, beaming forth rays of splendour, are for ever shining in the glorious firmament of heaven; their spiritual, their powerful, their incorruptible, their glorified bodies, not clogging, but aiding and

giving activity and quickness to the intellectual faculty, and all engaged in the sight and enjoyment and service of God, who is all, and in all, they together joint sharers of each other's bliss for ever and ever.

Should not our hearts faint to reach this bliss? should not our souls aspire after this glory? O you who are following riches, here are enduring riches! O you who are thirsting after pleasure, here are pleasures for evermore! O you who are panting after honour, by patient continuance in well-doing, here seek for glory, and honour, and immortality!

But I hasten to close with

V. THE PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF THIS SUBJECT.

What does the doctrine of the resurrection teach us?

1. IT SHOULD STRENGTHEN OUR HOPE OF REGENERATION. This is the very lesson which our Lord is here drawing. You observe his argument in the verses before our text, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself: And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man.* (John

v. 24, 25.) He then confirms this statement of his giving spiritual life, by the yet more remarkable fact of our text, the resurrection of the body, *Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice.* (John v. 28.) He who can raise the dead body, can also quicken the dead soul. O blessed truth! We need not preach the Saviour's power to open the graves and bring all therein to judgment, without preaching also his present ability to give you spiritual life. Desire you the resurrection of life? Remember, *he that hath the Son hath life,* even eternal life; and the voice of Christ sounding forth in his word, and proclaimed by his ministers, is effectual to give spiritual life. O may we find it so at this time. Lord Jesus, quicken the dead here. Give to multitudes here spiritual life. I long for the day when I shall see the symptoms of spiritual life multiply, and behold you all evidently and deeply concerned about your eternal interests.

IT SHOULD QUICKEN US TO A HOLY LIFE.

As the harvest is according to the seed sown, so is the resurrection. *He that soweth to the flesh. shall of the flesh reap corruption; he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.* (Gal. vi. 8.) Do you desire to escape the fearful resurrection of damnation; do you desire a beautiful and glorious body, and a holy and perfect soul?—then live to God now, in doing good.

When St. Paul speaks of his *having hope towards God, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust,* he adds, *And herein do I exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence, towards God, and towards men.* (Acts xxiv. 15, 16.) Often place these last scenes before your eyes; if you are becoming cold and careless in the ways of Christ, think of the resurrection day.

IT SHOULD RAISE US ABOVE WORLDLY SORROW.

How peculiarly heavy were Job's sorrows and afflictions; but in the midst of them he draws comfort from this doctrine: *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.* (Job xix. 25, 26.) David found similar consolation, *My flesh shall rest in hope, for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell.* (Psalm xvi. 9, 10.) Death is but a rest previous to the morning of the resurrection. When we lose a beloved brother in Christ, we may, and should mourn the loss, (Isaiah lvii. 1.) but we cannot sorrow *even as those which have no hope;* for all *which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.* (1 Thess. iv. 13, 14.) *The time is short*—the resurrection day is at hand, when we shall again receive the dead to life.

IT ILLUSTRATES ALL GOD'S PERFECTIONS.

Now, many things are dark and obscure; we see things but in part. Wicked men seem to go

unpunished; they often have authority and power, and use it wickedly; good men are tried and afflicted, despised, and lightly esteemed; many things seem quite out of place, and Satan triumphs, and the godly mourn, and the wicked flourish. But the resurrection day will clear up things; just as the sun dispels the mists and fogs, and discovers to us the beauty of nature, so the rising of the Sun of Righteousness in the morning of the resurrection will clear up all the now hidden beauties of providence and grace. We shall discover with inexpressible clearness and distinctness, the wisdom and truth, the justice and mercy of all God's dealings, and say from the heart, *He hath done all things well.* (Mark vii. 37.)

IT COMPLETES THE WORK OF REDEMPTION.

In one view, that was completed when on the cross our Saviour uttered the words, *It is finished.* A further step in its completeness was taken when he, *the first-begotten of the dead, rose from the dead.* (Rev. i. 5.) The first fruits only however, of them that slept were then presented to God; but when all that sleep in Jesus are raised, then shall *the last enemy, death, be destroyed,* yes, *swallowed up in victory,* and the grand design of redemption *in bringing many sons to glory,* be completely accomplished.

And now, brethren, I have set these things before you, let me ask, what are your purposes?

The gospel is either *a savour of death unto death*, or *a savour of life unto life*. (2 Cor. ii. 16.) If, just excited for a moment, you leave the house of God and your seriousness is dissipated in worldly conversation, and you return to your old course again, you will be more hardened than ever and farther from God, and more likely to perish with the wicked, than if the gospel light had never beamed upon you. I beseech you, every one for your own sake, for my sake, for the Saviour's sake, let not this be the sad end of our labours, no, not to one soul among you.

But if, on the other hand, this all important subject lead any hitherto careless to inquire, *What must I do to be saved;* I proclaim in their ears, *Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.* (Acts xvi. 30, 31.)

And as to you, my Christian brethren, may this subject quicken every spiritual affection in your hearers. May you say and feel with the Apostle, *I count all things but loss for Christ, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.* (Phil. iii. 8, 10.)

SERMON VII.

THE JUDGMENT DAY.

REVELATION XX. 11—13.

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it: and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

AND is there such an event to be anticipated? And must earth and heaven fly away, and this great white throne, with its awful and trans-

cendently glorious Judge seated upon it, appear? And must the whole human race stand before Him? And every one be judged according to their works? Surely every thought is directed towards, and influenced by, such an event. Surely all other matters that can engage the mind of man will be subordinate to this overwhelming truth! We say every Sabbath, "We believe that thou shalt come to be our judge," and yet alas! alas! the prospects of any temporal loss or worldly advantage will far more readily enter into the mind, and occupy the whole attention of those beings for whom that judgment is set.

Surely were there not a tremendous perverseness within, a deep slumber, an awful death in trespasses and sins, to this event all eyes would be directed, on this all thoughts would be engaged, by this all cares engrossed. Every fear and hope, joy and sorrow, would have a reference and bearing to our acceptance at last before the great and final Judge.

How is this unconcern to be removed, but by distinctly placing the subject before you. May our God enable me to do so at this time!

We have already considered death conducting the spirit into the eternal world, the awful realities of the resurrection, the sound of the trumpet, the great shout heard, the dead bodies awakened, the Judge descending, and the twofold resurrec-

tion, that of life and that of damnation. We will now notice more particularly the proceedings of this great day, under these heads—

1. THE JUDGE UPON THE THRONE,
2. THE ASSEMBLY GATHERED BEFORE HIM,
3. THE OPENING OF THE BOOKS,
4. THE JUDGMENT ITSELF.

I. THE JUDGE UPON THE THRONE.

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them.

We have here the throne of judgment, the Judge seated on it, the effect of his appearance.

I. THE THRONE OF JUDGMENT—*a great white throne.*

It is a *throne*, under which is conveyed to us the idea of majesty and dominion. It is the throne of the Most High, all whose decrees are authoritative and absolute, equitable and holy, *Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.* There can be no appeal to any other tribunal; the decision of this judgment will irreversibly fix our condition.

It is a *great* throne, which points out the magnitude and extent of the judgment to be then made. What God calls great is truly so. How great the judgment of that day, when all called great in this world bows before it: when apostate

angels, who sinned before our world was, and all the generations, and tribes, and nations of the whole earth, through successive ages, are summoned, and which the glorious heavenly host, cherubim and seraphim, angels and archangels, surround! How great when the sentence of him who sits upon it shall determine the final everlasting state of millions upon millions of immortal beings.

It is a *white* throne, emblematic of its purity and uprightness. There can be neither partiality nor error in its decisions. There is no fear of consequences to turn the Judge aside from the path of strictest justice, and no bribery nor desire of the favour of any creature to bias him. The judgment of God is *according to truth.—For there is no respect of persons with God.* Now men speak much against the hardness and severity of God's requirements; but the conscience of every one judged will in that day so accord with the sentence pronounced, that even the condemned shall be silent in their own behalf.

O my brethren, often realise the circumstances of that day! Let us place before our eyes that great event, *When the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him,* and dwell often in our thoughts and meditations on that period, when *he shall sit on the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations.* You

and I shall be there, and the preaching and the hearing of this very sermon shall be one of those things which will then testify for or against us.

2. THE JUDGE SEATED ON IT.

I saw him that sat upon it.

Who is this *King of Glory?* Who is this most worthy Judge eternal? It is our Lord Jesus Christ. The Scriptures frequently speak of him as presiding over all the stupendous scenes of this day. (Mark viii. 38; Matt. xxv. 31.) *The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.* (John v. 22.) The throne of judgment is therefore called *the judgment seat of Christ.* (Rom. xiv. 10; 2 Cor. v. 10.) And he it is who shall be seated on this great white throne.

O how different from his first coming! Then he was shut out of human dwellings, born in a stable, a weak and helpless babe in his virgin mother's arms, cradled in a manger, subject to his parents, brought up as a carpenter, despised and rejected of men. Then he was a man of sorrows, not having where to lay his head. Then he was himself tried, judged, condemned, spit upon, nailed to a cross, crucified with thieves, and laid in the grave. This he submitted to, this he underwent for you, for me, that we might, through his sufferings for us, escape judgment, condemnation, shame, and everlasting contempt.

But now how changed! He appears infinitely more glorious by the contrast of that humiliation to which, in his love and pity and for man's redemption, he submitted. He now is manifested in his true and proper character, as *the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person.* His face shining as the sun; myriads of angels attending upon him, the whole universe waiting to hear the decisions of his lips, and that voice which is to fix for ever the destiny of man.

O lover of Jesus! think of this, and take courage. That Being in whom thou hast trusted, whom thou hast made thy righteousness, whose Spirit thou hast received, who is thy Redeemer and thy Saviour; He, He is Judge of all the earth. Thou hast confessed Him here, He will confess thee there.

O despiser of Jesus! tremble and be alarmed. This is he whom thou art rejecting; this is he whom thou slightest. O agree with him quickly. *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.* (Psalm ii. 12.)

3. THE EFFECT OF HIS APPEARANCE.

From his face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them.

There is a sublimity and awful magnificence

in these ideas, that surpass our loftiest thoughts. O what will be the reality! The words shew the entire dissolution of the present fabric of the world. In the language of St. Peter, it is *the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat....the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up.* For thousands of years this earth has been the abode of sinners. Every kingdom, every inheritance, every habitation, and every possession, is stained and dyed with sin; all below is contaminated and polluted with that which, in the sight of God, is more abominable than the plague or poison. How vile is sin, which pollutes all it touches!

But if the material world, in which men have sinned, be dissolved,—if even *the very garment spotted with the flesh* must be destroyed, O where shall the sinner himself appear? What will become of the ungodly? My beloved brethren these are the grand realities; all other concerns are trifles.

Alas, we spend our thoughts and cares on adorning our houses and filling them with goods, and beautifying and perfecting them; forgetting that the end of all things is at hand, forgetting that all that is beautiful, and even useful, shall be burnt up and consumed, in the great fire which shall destroy this earth, and all the things

which are therein. Let us learn lessons of moderation and contentment, and never make this world our home and inheritance; but *use the world so as not abusing it*, and *make to ourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when we fail, they may receive us into everlasting habitations.* (Luke xvi. 9.)

Such, my brethren, is the throne of judgment, the Judge seated upon it, and the effect of his appearance: the great realities which so deeply concern every one of us.

II. THE ASSEMBLY GATHERED BEFORE THE JUDGE.

The whole human race will then be gathered before Him. The dead, small and great. We may consider this assembly as consisting of the living and the dead,

1. Those LIVING on the earth shall then be judged.

St. Paul says, on this head, *Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible.*

St. John does not, in this passage, mention the living: it may be that he speaks of the dead, because of the apparent difficulty of their being raised and judged; if the dead of all ages would

be judged, much more shall the living. Indeed, other passages of scripture are clear on this point. St. Paul, speaking of what shall happen, *as it regards Christians*, says, *We which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep.... The dead in Christ shall rise first, . . . then we, which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.*

As it regards the wicked also, millions will be living on the face of the earth, at the time of the general judgment. Satan will *deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth;* the number of the deceived will be incalculably great *as the sand of the sea.* They will be as full of worldly schemes, and plans, and wickedness, as now; as full of enmity against God and his truth; and in a moment the last great *fire* shall *come down from God out of heaven*, and kindle the tremendous flame which shall destroy this lower world.

O brethren, think of that day! Most likely the day of your death will find you as you are now; unless God, in his marvellous mercy, convert you. You have often thought of repenting, but have not yet repented; and of amending, but have not yet amended: and if it go on so—Oh, if death and judgment were now to burst on you, where would you be! Would you be taken to

heaven, or cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death? Are you ready and prepared for the coming of the Son of God?

2. Those numbered with the DEAD will then be collected and judged.

Our text expressly mentions, the dead, small and great; *and the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them.* We learn hence, that all classes of society appear in judgment, all places give up their dead.

Every class in society, whatever the age be, from the infant to the aged Methuselah; and every rank, from the beggar by the way-side to the mightiest monarch on his throne—without exception—all shall appear in judgment: the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the young and the old, the wise and the unwise, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, without reserve, and without one exception, all shall be judged. The murderer and his victim, the oppressor and the oppressed, the master and the servant, shall face each other again, and all stand in one vast assembly, before the Holy Judge. Those distinctions which men have so eagerly thirsted after, will for ever vanish, or rather, if they have ministered to sin, will heighten and aggravate the woe of that day. The treasures which wicked men

have amassed, in the thought that those riches would secure them against evil, become the very things which will add to their load of misery. Their *gold and silver is cankered*, and *the rust of them shall be a witness against* them, and *shall eat* their *flesh as it were fire*. Their very pleasures *have nourished* their *hearts as* for *a day of slaughter*. O brethren, whatever be your wishes, or your fears, or your terrors; whatever be your unbelief, or contempt, or neglect, there and then *you* must appear.

Then every *place* will give up its tenants. The *sea*, in all its unfathomable depths, withholds not one of the dead. A whole world was once drowned, when upon *those disobedient, in the days of Noah, God brought in the flood upon the world of the ungodly:* the armies of Pharoah were swallowed up in those depths, they too shall re-appear,—not as pursuing the terrified people of Israel, but as themselves under a more tremendous terror than when the waves rushed back upon them, and they were overwhelmed in the Red Sea. Yes, and all the countless multitudes that since have found a grave in the great deep, not one of them shall be wanting. *Death* too, however it may have taken its prey, in whatever varied forms it may have come on the sons of men, shall give up its captives. *Hell*, also, the place of departed spirits, shall no longer detain its imprisoned tenants. Re-united to their bodies, the whole

man, body and soul, shall be brought together to judgment.

See the vast assembly! it is not one country, but every country: it is not one generation, but every generation: it is not the eight hundred millions now living on earth, but the millions of millions that have existed from the first Adam, to the last born of the human race. They are all gathered. They all stand before the great white throne. Methinks they wait, in solemn pause, the movements of the great Judge! What a scene then will be unfolded, in which you and I shall not be spectators only, but parties deeply concerned.

O sinners, unconverted, worldly, careless sinners, what will be your state then? All your high looks will be for ever abashed; all your hard speeches against God's truth for ever silenced; all your careless indifference for ever removed. All your worldly successes and advantages, instead of being your glory and your security, are your distress and your everlasting shame. O what would you in that day give for the time which you now have! Sinners on a death-bed cry out for a day more, for an hour more, that they may have time to repent, and attend to the one thing needful—their salvation: what will their desire be, for a day, or an hour, when all that they feared is come upon them; *when their*

fear cometh as desolation, and their destruction as a whirlwhind. You, my brethren, have that time now; use it so now as in the great day of judgment, you will wish that you had done.

O you who trust in Christ, and love him; this will be the great day of your joy and triumph; this the day that will complete your happiness. The Judge is your friend; all that troubled you will be for ever done away. You shall enter the joy of your Lord.

O my beloved people, let me entreat you, as your real friend: let me beseech you, as one who must himself give account of every sermon he preaches: let me entreat you, as one earnestly longing over you in the bowels of Jesus Christ, to join without delay the despised flock of Christ, —to sacrifice every thing, rather than your soul's salvation.

SERMON VIII.

THE JUDGMENT DAY.

REVELATION XX. 11—13.

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away: and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

FROM these striking words we proposed to point your attention to four things. 1. The Judge upon the throne; 2. The assembly gathered before him: 3. The opening of the books: and 4. The judg-

ment itself. We entered into the two former heads. Under the Judge on the throne, we dwelt on the throne of judgment, the Judge seated on it, and the effect of his appearance; in reference to the assembly gathered before him, we viewed them under the two aspects of the living and the dead.

We left off at this point, the assembled world gathered before the great Judge of quick and dead, and waiting his decision. Now let us consider,

3. THE OPENING OF THE BOOKS, and

4. THE JUDGMENT ITSELF.

The proceedings of that great day will commence with

III. THE OPENING OF THE BOOKS.

And the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life.

You may remark that there are books in general, and a particular book.

There are BOOKS IN GENERAL. The expression is figurative, denoting the accurate register of all our talents and opportunities, and of all our thoughts, and words, and works. But let us endeavour to illustrate this statement.

There is the BOOK OF GOD'S HOLY LAW. This which contains the rule of judgment, it may be presumed, will be first opened. It has been al-

ready laid before men. Its main directions are to love *the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength*, and *to love thy neighbour as thyself;* but it calls for perfect and entire obedience, without one omission; *whosoever shall keep the whole Law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.* (James ii. 10.) A perfect pattern of obedience was given in the life of Christ, and the law is so just and reasonable, its requirements are so clearly our duty, and tend so to promote our happiness, that disobedience is without excuse. If we say that we are unable to keep it, that very plea is our condemnation. Unable supremely to love thy Creator, thy chief benefactor, unable to love thy neighbour as thyself! O how great thy sinfulness! how utterly indefensible that plea! How self-condemnatory that excuse!

There is then the book of PROVIDENCE.

This comprehends the various talents entrusted to us, of whatever kind; whether ability of understanding, or wealth of substance, or influence of condition, or strength of body. It includes all the advantages which we have enjoyed from our earliest years: our birth, our baptism, our education in a christian country, and the knowledge imparted and stored up for future usefulness in life: the christian friends who counselled us, the sermons and the sacraments of the church. The

book of providence records all the opportunities which we have had, whether improved or neglected: and all the seasons in which we might have prayed and read the Scriptures. It then marks down the patience, and forbearance, and long-suffering of God, his waiting long for our repentance, and the various affecting calls and awakening incidents, the sudden deaths, the touching sermons, the afflictions, and losses, and every thing else that God in his goodness designed and sent, to lead you to repentance: and the way in which these have been met by you. O how will you be astonished at your unconcern and hardness of heart, amidst so many things to rouse and awaken you!

In the book of SATAN'S ACCUSATION, behold another fearful register! He is always, by his innumerable agents of evil, present with men, and noting down their doings. There is no place so secret, but he can be there—no work of darkness so hidden, but he with malignant joy can observe it, and takes account of it. You may have long ago forgotten, he never forgets.—His name is Adversary, his office is *the Accuser of* the *brethren, which accused them before our God day and night.* (Rev. xii. 10.) He will enumerate the sins to which he seduced and tempted you, and every aggravating circumstance of each, of all; and O what an unexpected,

what a lengthened catalogue will he have to produce!

The BOOK OF CONSCIENCE will also be there. Conscience now soon loses sight of what is past; it is also apt to slumber and to become blinded and seared by custom in sinning. But the great and terrible scenes of the day of judgment will effectually awaken conscience. Times of alarm have often this effect even in this world. When Joseph's brethren fell into trouble, their conscience, which, as far as appears, had slept for many years, was suddenly roused, their sale of their brother to be a slave rose up afresh in all the horrors of a guilty conscience; and, when nothing seemed to lead them to it, *they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear, therefore is this distress come upon us.* The book of conscience does now record all those secret sins which you may have securely kept from all your fellow-creatures; every secret impurity, every hidden work of dishonesty, and every slander meditated or uttered in private; but the writing is like that which remains invisible till it be brought to something that discovers it; the day of judgment will exhibit legibly all the secret records, and your own eyes will be enlightened clearly and fully to behold all your life distinctly. If now even the enlightened

conscience of the believer testifies in his heart, mine iniquities *are more than the hairs of my head, therefore my heart faileth me,* (Psalm xl. 12,) what an accumulated multitude of sins will conscience in that day unveil!

Another book is that of HUMAN TESTIMONY: and this either that of good men or of bad. Good men must be witnesses in that day against those whom they counselled, instructed, and warned in vain. Enoch and Noah will have to testify against the ungodly world before the flood: Lot against the wicked men of Sodom: Elijah and Micaiah against Ahab: and all the faithful ministers of Christ will have to give testimony how their message was received, and of some, alas, they must *give account with grief, and not with joy.* On the other hand, there will be the mutual accusations of sinners against sinners: of companions and associates against other. This is also a tremendous book. The wicked father accuses the wicked son, and the son recriminates against his father: the wicked husband testifies against the wicked wife, and the wife against the husband: the wicked master against the wicked servant, and the servant against the master. And their testimony embraces all injuries received, all duties neglected, all the want of religion in the family, all neglect of God in the house, and in the daily occupations. Indeed every part of the

earth will have a testimony respecting us. Do not such places, such houses, such rooms as have been the scenes of sin, recall the sin to your mind? In the language of scripture, *The stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it.*

One more book comprehending more than all others shall be added, the book of GOD'S PERFECT KNOWLEDGE. The omniscient eye of God has seen the whole of man. His knowledge is perfect. —*All things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.* (Heb. iv. 13.) No darkness hides from his eye to whom *the darkness and the light are both alike.* (Psalm cxxxix. 12.) All the inward parts of men, their thoughts, motives, and dispositions, as well as the outward effect in their words, and writings, and works, are recorded in this book. Nothing is forgotten, nothing overlooked, nothing screened, but as in the blaze of noonday, all is manifest and clear.

For these books are to be OPENED—to be laid opened—to be visibly unfolded, that the equity of the Divine judgment may be universally cleared, and without exception acknowledged and confessed. O what should we now think, to have every secret sin blazoned abroad among all around us! The opening of these books is but the illustration of what our Lord says, *Nothing*

is secret that shall not be made manifest, neither any thing hid that shall not be known and come abroad. (Luke viii. 17.)

But do we not shut out all hope? In this way, shall not all perish? If indeed, these books were all, we might despair; but, blessed be God, another book is produced at that day.

We notice then, in the next place, a PARTICULAR BOOK—*the book of life*, in which book, if the name of any one be inscribed, he is not condemned, but is accepted.

There is a frequent allusion to this particular book in the preceding chapters. The Saviour promises *to him that overcometh, I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.* (Rev. iii. 5.) He shews that all shall worship the beast, *whose names are not written in the book of life, ... of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.* (Rev. xiii. 8; xvii. 8.)

The figure seems taken from the list of freemen of a city. There is a list of freemen belonging to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. Their salvation has been decreed from eternity; they were *chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world.* In the fulness of time God called them to himself, outwardly by his word, and inwardly by his Spirit: their names are on the Redemeer's Roll, and they have subscribed with their hands to the Lord. They have

ventured their souls on the merits of Jesus; they are freely justified by his grace, and have received his Spirit, and brought forth that fruit of good living, which distinguishes those who belong to Christ.

If their sins be written against them in other books, in this book they are all struck through with the marks of the Redeemer's blood. They are blotted out according to that gracious promise, *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins,* (Isaiah xliii. 25;) and on the other hand, to them in the language of St. Paul, *God imputeth righteousness without works.*

Yet even those, whose names are in the book of life, are judged according to their works; for all are judged—*every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Every man's work shall be manifest, for the day shall declare it.* (1 Cor. iii. 13.) Their judgment is necessary for two reasons; that the divine justice and equity in the discrimination made between them and the wicked, may be clearly seen, and that the proportion of their reward may be fixed.—Though saved by grace, there are yet different degrees of glory according to our fruitfulness in good works, for *he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.* But here is the blessedness of the Book of life—it furnishes a plea to answer the various charges

which lie against us—it records, as its first name, if I may so say, that Prince of Life, the Head of his people, who bore their sins in his own body on the tree; and by whose obedience they are accounted righteous; who is the second Adam, through whose righteousness *the free gift comes upon all* who believe in him *unto justification of life. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* (1 Cor. xv. 22.)

Brethren, may you then believe in Jesus, and live to him, and so shall it be manifest that your names are inscribed in the book of life.

Think, we beseech you, think again and again, what you can possibly answer to all the charges written in God's book against you; apply to the Lord Jesus without delay, and never cease calling upon him for salvation; continue to ask, to seek, and to knock, so shall you obtain satisfaction, on just grounds, through the manifest work of the Spirit on your hearts and in your lives, that your sins are all blotted out, and will be no more remembered against you, that you are clothed with that righteousness in which alone you can be accepted, and which is *unto, and upon all them that believe*, and are *made meet for* the heavenly *inheritance.*

IV. THE JUDGMENT ITSELF.

The dead were judged out of those things which

were written in the books, every man according to their works.

Notice its comprehensiveness, its condemnation, its justification.

Its COMPREHENSIVENESS is universal. It is not only a judgment for all men, but for all works also. If every man is judged according to his works, as stated in our text, then not only *must we all stand before the judgment seat of Christ*, but also all be judged for all our works; so the Scriptures plainly state, *For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil.* (Eccles. xii. 14.) *Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.* (Matt. xii. 36.) The whole of life as recorded in the books which have been mentioned will be brought under review, our thoughts and words and works, our relative duties, our tempers, our daily conduct. And let the self-righteous remember that, if they rest on their own obedience, one single sin will condemn them. (James ii. 10.)

O fearful scrutiny! Sinners how will ye appear! Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God! You *cannot answer him one of a thousand* of the charges brought against you. Think of this, ere it be too late, and seek the true refuge.

The CONDEMNATION of that day.

All who have not fled for refuge to Christ Jesus, and have no meetness for the heavenly inheritance, must evidently and without remedy be condemned. *There is none other name under heaven given whereby we must be saved,*—and they have rejected that only name. See the wicked then clearly and fully manifested to be wicked. See them without excuse, speechless before the throne. Now they begin to feel the force of that question they should have before considered, *Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?*

It is a fearful thing to see a criminal at an earthly tribunal tried for his life and condemned to death; to mark his pale face, his quivering lips, and his trembling limbs, and to hear the judge pronounce the awful penalty; but all this is temporary and unimportant compared with this everlasting condemnation. The words of the Judge are full of terror, *Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* (Matt. xxv. 41.) And the execution of the sentence immediately follows, *Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.* (Rev. xx. 15.)

O dread above every thing this condemation! Fear nothing compared with this! Suffer any thing rather than undergo this! It comprehends all other evils, and with the tremendous addition

that it is at once evil without measure, or mixture, or end!

The JUSTIFICATION of that day.

There are those accepted and justified in that great day. Owned as altogether righteous, not a sin laid to their charge. They are placed on the right hand, and hear the words, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* And thus they are perfectly, unchangeably, and eternally blessed.

But what is the ground of their justification? How are they thus passed from death to life; in what way is it possible for any sinful human being then to be justified, with such books opened, and by such an omniscient and righteous Judge?

We have told you of the book of life; but let us more distinctly shew the way of justification.

Tried by the law of God, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. But God has devised a wonderful scheme of justice and mercy. *The righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.* (Romans iii. 22, 23.) This way of salvation through faith in Jesus, God sends his ministers to proclaim. Men by nature wrapped

up in unbelief, and worldliness, and love of sin, disregard, slight, and neglect this proclamation of grace.

But God's purposes of mercy are not incomplete, and therefore shall not be frustrated. He has a chosen people, who are made willing in the day of his power. To them he gives so largely of his blessed Spirit that they listen to his invitations, they believe his promises, they trust in the Lord Jesus, and they obtain the righteousness of God which is by faith. Then the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them, and filled with love and gratitude, they devote themselves, and all they have to God their Saviour, and their works of love prove their faith to be genuine, and manifest their character to be sincere.

Now to such there is a perfect deliverance from condemnation. There is *no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* In the words of our Lord, *He that believeth on him is not condemned.* And as there is a deliverance from condemnation, so there is a complete justification in the sight of the whole world. The assembled universe may be challenged with the triumphant question, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth.* (Romans viii. 33.) Clothed with the perfect righteousness of the Divine Redeemer, all the malignity and subtilty of Satan

cannot lay one sin against them, or discover one defect in that glorious robe.

O, my brethren, that you may be numbered among them! This is the end of all my labours among you, this my heart's desire and prayer for you. You hear the invitations of the Gospel; you have the outward call of the Word of God. O that you may be inwardly touched and called by the Divine Spirit; may lay these things seriously to heart, and determine to lose every thing rather than lose your soul, to do, to suffer every thing rather than endanger your acceptance at the last.

Ever *remember this great acoount* that you must one day give at the judgment seat of Christ, that every hour as it passes along tends to fix the character of your final and eternal condition. Often ask yourselves, how will this appear in the great day of account and retribution; is my course such as in the great, the last judgment will be approved.

Let every one truly *repent of sin.* This is St. Paul's practical application of this doctrine.—*God commandeth all men every where to repent, because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained.* (Acts xvii. 30, 31.) *Except ye repent, ye shall all perish.* Let us then often try our ways and judge ourselves before that day

arrive. So judging ourselves we should escape being judged of the Lord. *Repent then, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.* Give up all sinful courses; turn you every one from his evil ways.

Let the Christian, however, look at this day, not with dread, but with believing hope—not with distrust, but with cheering expectation. Brethren, *God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.* To *them that look for him, he will appear the second time without sin unto salvation.* The self-righteous and the unconverted may regard this as a day of terror; the believer should not do so, but rather, "joyful through hope and rooted in charity," may anticipate this, as the day which will consummate his blessedness, end the course of all sin, restrain every iniquity in the prison of hell, and begin the unmingled reign and triumph of peace, and holiness, and happiness. O joyful day, when Christ *shall appear and we shall appear with him in glory!* O happy season, which shall for ever terminate darkness, and sin, and sorrow, and land us in his presence and kingdom, in whose *presence is fulness of joy!* The Christian may bless God that it will soon arrive. To him it is a joyful sound that his Lord says, *Surely I come quickly,* and his heart replies, Amen! *even so, come, Lord Jesus.*

My brethren, I long that you should all be thus blessed. Why should you not? Are the pleasures of sin for a little season, so precious as to recompense the loss of all this joy? O surely it is not so. Then from henceforth be in earnest—make sure this one point, SALVATION.

SERMON IX.

ETERNITY.

2 CORINTHIANS IV. 18.

We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

THE subject of eternity is one of those depths that are unfathomable by the human mind. At first view, it may seem easy to imagine a never-ending state of existence. This general notion is obvious: not so the realizing view that shall comprehend with any distinctness its boundless extent, and its unutterable magnitude. With the astonishment of a new and before imperfectly apprehended subject of stupendous import, it will probably break after death upon the minds

of the most prepared; and were death now to call others into its dark abode, and their spirits now to enter on the eternal scenes beyond it, to which they are hastening, O their alarm and consternation, as they saw the temporary good of this world vanishing, and with it the hope of heaven's eternal glory!

All have a general idea of eternity; what we all want is a more believing and realizing view of it. To die daily, to contemplate eternity daily, to live as strangers and pilgrims here, O how difficult! Your minister feels the difficulty. May the Divine Spirit help him at this time, to open this subject to our mutual profit! May the words of the text be true of you and of me, *We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

Let us consider,

1. THE THINGS SEEN,
2. THE THINGS NOT SEEN,
3. ETERNITY,
4. OUR DUTY,
5. THE PRECIOUSNESS OF CHRIST.

I. THE THINGS SEEN.

The things which are seen are temporal.

We will notice,

The objects intended, and their transitory nature.

1. THE OBJECTS INTENDED. The things seen.

Not merely what is seen with the eye, but all that relates merely to this visible world. All that is in the world, all that it can do, either to hurt us, or to comfort us; or, to use the expression of Solomon, *All the works that are done under the sun.* (Eccles. i. 14.) The varied pleasures of this world, which delight the heart, and fill it with mirth and gladness; its accumulated wealth placing the possessor in independence of his fellow-creatures, or its honours making him the object of esteem and general commendation, so that all speak well of him,—these are among the things seen. All the pursuits and labours which engage us day by day, of which Solomon says, *I looked on all the works my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do,*—these are things seen. Every intellectual improvement, the stores of human learning and wisdom, the knowledge of arts and science, trade and business, however valuable for this world,—they are also here included. Whatever is the object of sight and sense, and whatever the carnal mind desires for its present happiness, comes under this description. Then again all that distresses the mind, as it regards these things, all sorrows and afflictions, losses and trials, however acutely

we may feel them; or joys and prosperity, gains and blessing, however assured to us, are not to be omitted. In short, all the concerns and events of human life, the schemes of politicians, the revolutions of empires, the forms of government, the enterprises of merchants, the construction and government of cities and countries, the progress of science, the ordinary pursuits and speculations of trade, these are what we mean by the things seen. Nor, however necessary they may be for the present life, can they be looked at as things of main importance to an immortal being like man.

2. THEIR TRANSITORY NATURE. They are temporal.

They are all for a season. However great or glorious, or necessary, or profitable, there is one stamp upon all—they are for a time only—soon they come to an end.

The monarch, surrounded with his court, environed with his guards, or shielded by the love of his people, must lay aside his crown, and give up his kingdom. The learned, with all the stores of the wisdom of ages, cannot ward off the stroke which will send him to a country where learning (apart from that which makes men wise to salvation,) avails nothing. The sensualist, who takes the utmost pains to delight and gratify a pampered body, must soon leave that body in the grave, the

prey of the worms. The ambitious, who has made all obstacles yield to his advancement, and had many dependent upon him, must speedily enter alone, without one dependent, the eternal world.

Whatever good things we may, by wisdom and prudence, by art and contrivance, have gathered around us, if they be only this world's goods, we must soon part with all. Whatever evil things we may be burdened by, if we are Christians, those evils will soon pass away and be felt no more. The most comfortable dwelling that we can make for ourselves, is but a tent for a short stay, and not our real home; the most profitable business we can be engaged in, is but as a provision for a short journey; the best situation we can have in this world, is a mere seat in a pilgrimage.

Suppose a ship at sea has a dangerous leak, from which, as all the sailors know, the vessel must in a few hours sink in the great deep; suppose a passenger to be so absurd as to spend all the time that remains in hanging his cabin with pictures, painting, beautifying, and adorning every part, and thinking of nothing but how his cabin shall be most admired by his fellow passengers, though the ship was filling with water, though the waves swept away one of the company after another, and at length entered his

cabin: suppose he stopped not in his folly till he himself sunk with the vessel: you can see the madness of this: but suppose the greater part of the crew were pursuing the same sort of conduct, some in one way and some in another, but all regardless of the coming shipwreck, you justly say, it is incredible, such a thing never happened.

Look abroad in the world: what are men doing? They are painting the cabin while the ship is sinking. Look into your own life,—what is it? The wisest plan that ends merely in this world's glory, is like some petty ornament put in the cabin of a sinking vessel. Nor is this all. Sin carries a sting beyond the grave. A satisfied lust in time, is the hell of eternity. *Thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented.*

O my brethren, I feel myself the lethargic, the palsying, the deadening effect of this world's good, and long therefore to rouse myself as well as to awaken you. It is affecting to see how naturally we all tend to fill and satisfy our souls with the poor dirt of the perishing things of this world, instead of rising on eagle's wings to the ennobling and sublime things of eternity; but death is coming, and it will shew us what is temporal, and what is eternal, in a way beyond deception.

It will strip us bare of all temporal things. It will pull off from us friends and relations, revenues and titles, honours and riches, and pleasures. Things but of one character will follow us to another world, even those *things which are not seen and are eternal.*

II. THE THINGS NOT SEEN.

The things which are not seen are eternal..

Here also we will consider, the objects intended, and their enduring character,

1. THE OBJECTS INTENDED.

Things which are not seen.

The Apostle means all those spiritual things with which as immortal beings we are chiefly concerned.

The God with whom we have to do: in whom we live, move, and have our being: who is a Spirit, and whom no human eye has seen. Yet is he about our path and about our bed, and spies out all our ways; his judgment of us is to us every thing—his favour better than life, and his frown worse than death. His being and existence, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three persons in one God, is one of those great realities that are not seen.

The angelic hosts that surround his throne, and fly to execute his errands, who are ministering spirits ministering to the heirs of salvation

and our future companions in the glory above, also are among the great realities not seen by the eye of flesh.

Again, the accursed angels with their apostate chief, who *goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour*, (1 Peter v. 8.) and who works in the children of disobedience, however much the wicked may ridicule his fearful power, and deny his very existence, yet the Bible account is true; he does exist, and his existence and of legions under him, are among those realities which, though not seen, have the existence and fatal influence which the Bible ascribes to them.

The soul of man, as distinct from the body, is spiritual and immaterial, and therefore invisible. Man *sees* the body and can kill the body; the soul he sees not, it is beyond his reach, impervious to all external attack, and imperishable.

All that relates to this immortal soul, those graces and dispositions which are the fruits of the Divine Spirit, the work of faith, the patience of hope and labour of love, in which grace enables the Christian to abound, though man sees not the secret principles, God does, and they survive the death of the body, and are like seed that grows and flourishes in the harvest of futurity. *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord; for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.* (Rev. xiv. 13.)

And on the other hand all those sins in which the wicked delight, follow them also as a seed of a miserable futurity. Much would they wish to be free from the recollection; but the sin of lying follows the liar, and the sin of thieving follows the thief, and add to the bitter anguish of their ruin.

But more especially the great realities of hell and heaven—the regions of future woe—the realms of endless bliss—the lake that burns with fire and brimstone; and the paradise of eternal joy and glory—where is *the pure river of water of life clear as crystal* (Rev. xxii. 1.)—and the *tree of life* and *the throne of God and the Lamb*, and *no more curse*, and *fulness of joy*, and *pleasures for evermore*, these are *the things not seen* on which our eye should be fixed. For mark—

2. THEIR ENDURING CHARACTER.

They are eternal.

What an authoritative stamp is here? A piece of paper may be of little worth in itself, but let the paper have the signature and the stamp of the Bank of England, and it may be worth thousands or millions of property. Now there is this stamp of eternity put on all things not seen which we have brought before you; and this gives them an importance which language fails to express.

God is the eternal, immortal, invisible, and only wise God. He is properly *from everlasting*

to everlasting, without beginning as well as without end. Angels and fallen spirits and human beings have had a beginning, but they have no end of their existence, and their varied works affect their eternal condition, evil works terminating in endless woe, and good works in future and eternal bliss.

Not to enter however too largely on these things, mark only the eternity of the regions of future woe and bliss.

The unseen regions of future woe have the stamp of eternity upon them; this is their peculiar characteristic. Under whatever term you find these miserable regions mentioned in the scripture, a note of eternity is in some part or other affixed to the description. It is called by that most fearful of all terms,—*the wrath of God:* (Eph. v. 6.) but then it has this tremendous addition, it is called an abiding wrath, and the wrath to come. *He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him*, (John iii. 36.) *Flee from the wrath to come.* It is compared to a worm feeding on us, the perpetual gnawing of a guilty conscience; but then it is *a worm* that *never dies.* (Mark ix. 44.) It is at other times described as a fire (Isaiah lxvi. 34.) a furnace of fire, (Matt. xiii. 42.) a lake of fire, (Rev. xix. 20.) but it is a *fire that never shall be quenched*, (Mark ix. 44.) and is called *everlasting fire pre-*

pared for the devil and his angels. (Matt. xxv. 41.) Or, if it be named as *a prison,* (1 Peter iii. 19.) it is a prison from which men never go out; (Matt. v. 25, 26.) or as darkness, but it is *the blackness of darkness for ever,* (Jude 13.) reserved for the ungodly. The burning (Isaiah xxx. 34.) is *everlasting burnings.* (Isaiah xxxiii. 14.) The torment is an everlasting torment: *The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.* (Rev. xx. 10.) It is not to me pleasant to speak, nor to you pleasant to hear these things; but I must be faithful; and happy are you if by hearing them you are so warned as for ever to escape them.

On the other hand, the unseen realms of future bliss have, under their varied descriptions, always attached to them the same mark of eternity. If heaven be described as a kingdom, (Matt. v. 3.) it is also styled as *everlasting kingdom.* (2 Peter i. 11.) If it be a crown, it is a *crown that fadeth not away,* (1 Peter v. 4.) or glory, (Rom. v. 1.) it is *eternal glory;* (1 Peter v. 10.) or an inheritance, it is *incorruptible* as well as *undefiled;* (1 Peter i. 4.) or a house, it is a *house eternal in the heavens;* (2 Cor. v. 1.) or salvation, it is *eternal salvation;* (Heb. v. 9.) or life, it is *life everlasting.* (John iii. 16.)

But I pause in my description: and before I conclude, would address your consciences.

My brethren, you stand on the margin of eter-

nal things; the immense ocean of eternity is stretched out before you; you must soon embark upon it. Time, how short! life, what a vapour! *As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth; the wind passeth over it and it is gone,* (Psalm ciii. 15, 16.) he may die in a thousand different ways each hour. Any thing is strong enough when commissioned by your God to bring you to death, and launch you on this boundless sea of eternity. Here is one striking character of death; it lifts up the hangings that hide eternity, and it shews us the reality of what we now see not; death is in this view the entrance upon eternity.

On your life then, thus uncertain, depends a happy or a miserable eternity. I appeal to your understanding as men, to your conscience as accountable beings, to your reason as reasonable beings,—follow your true interests. Shall the tenant at will thus needlessly provoke and offend to the uttermost that landlord on whom he is wholly dependent? Shall the sailor on the mast-top fall asleep while the stormy ocean tosses the vessel to and fro with its swelling waves? then, much less should we on the brink of eternity offend our God, and be unconcerned about our souls.

O never forget there are multitudes that shall everlastingly perish. Your Saviour has declared

it in the plainest terms: *Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat.* (Matt. vii. 13.) Remember the possibility of being deceived—*there is a way that seemeth right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.* (Prov. xvi. 25.) And oh! if deceived, how fatal is the mistake. How terrible the reflection, 'I looked for heaven, and behold I am lost, for ever lost in hell!'

Improve then, to the uttermost, all the means which God has bestowed for your conviction and conversion:—the word of truth, constant prayer, self-examination, and weekly sabbaths. O rest not till you see your interests for eternity clearly and surely established. This is, this must be true wisdom. That is not wisdom which regards merely things seen. The rich man in the parable whose lands brought forth abundantly, was wise enough as to this world; he laid his plans judiciously in earthly things—but the Bible says, *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.* (Luke xii. 20.)

What is called wisdom in this world, at the best is but the wisdom of one who spends all in providing so well for his journey to a distant country, where he has to live the rest of his days, that he arrives a bankrupt at the journey's end. Often ask yourselves, 'Am I provided for eternity? What treasures have I for that heavenly

country?' Let us not live in waste here, and starve for ever. Most men are occupied in thinking how they shall live *in* the world, it should be, how they shall live *out of it*, in eternity.

O how Satan the great deceiver imposes on men; they take a pebble for a pearl, they prefer a flint to a diamond, they choose time before eternity, and strut about in the momentary delusion, as if adorned with real wealth and glory.

But my beloved brethren in Christ, let the consideration that eternity is at hand, calm your mind and remove all your anxieties about this world. The only material question, 'Where shall I lean my head, and lodge my soul, and find my home *for ever*,' is to you satisfactorily answered. *The Lord is the strength of your heart, and your portion for ever.* (Psalm lxxiii. 26.)

SERMON X.

ETERNITY.

2 CORINTHIANS IV. 18.

We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

We proposed to consider, 1. The things seen: 2. The things not seen: 3. Eternity: 4. Our duty: 5. The preciousness of Christ. We have considered the two former heads, pointing out under each head the objects intended, and the character of those objects. There remains to consider,

3. Eternity,
4. Our duty regarding it,
5. The preciousness of Christ.

III. THE NATURE OF ETERNITY.

Here is our great difficulty. We can only describe it according to our present very limited and imperfect views, and can rather say what it is not, than what it is. For instance,

It surpasses all description. Human language fails utterly to convey the full notion of eternity. Whatever is spoken of it, is far less than it is. Thus we talk of the ages of eternity, but there are properly no such æras, as ages in eternal existence; we talk of thousands of years past in eternity, but there are no years to mark the parts of a never-ending state.

It transcends human understanding. It cannot be weighed; for what can be placed in the opposite scale of the balance against eternity! It cannot be measured. There is some proportion between a second of time and millions of years; but what shall measure eternity. Our thoughts are vast and boundless; they can imagine worlds upon worlds, filled with happy beings, peopling unknown regions of the immeasurable universe: but our thoughts themselves are baffled and staggered, they become confounded and darkened, when they attempt to measure eternity.

It is being without end. Nothing shall put an end to our existence. God, who can, will not. His word cannot pass away; and in every threatening of eternal woe, in every promise of eternal bliss,—that word, on which the whole creation

is suspended, is pledged for our endless existence. Man cannot destroy his own life there, or that of his fellow-creatures. Nor is there change or return; when once we are launched on that ocean, we can never begin again, never return to re-act life.

Eternity is existence going on without diminution. There is no spending or wasting of eternity. In this life, every day and every hour shortens it; we have less to live from having lived so long: but it is not so in eternity, which is not marked by days and years. Millions of what we now call years and ages shall pass, and yet none of eternity shall be diminished; it shall make no difference in the immeasurable length which is yet to come. The sorrows of the lost will still be to come—an everlasting night overshadows them. The joys of the saved will still be to come—an everlasting morning refreshes them.

Once more—*all comparisons fall short* of a true resemblance. You may conceive of this place of worship full of grains of sand, and one grain taken away in a million of years, and the space of time this would require! We may conceive the whole earth as one vast globe of sand, and one grain taken away in a million years, and the extent of ages this would require! We may conceive the vast ocean, in all its extent and depth, and the removal of a drop each million

of years, and the space this would take! You may put all these together, and accumulate them again and again; but after reaching the utmost stretch of comparison, you are hardly beginning eternity, and are not at all nearer its termination: for eternity is an ocean without a bottom and without a shore. O then think, we beseech you, think often, deeply, and most seriously of eternity! Can it be, that one who is to dwell in it has never thought of it with any earnestness? We entreat you, meditate much on *eternity*.

4. OUR DUTY WITH REGARD TO ETERNITY.

Look not at things seen—Look at things not seen. There is apparently a contradiction in these directions. How can I not look at the things which I see? how can I look at things which I cannot see? There is an eye, however, that can make worldly things disappear, and see Him that is invisible, and behold and stedfastly gaze upon spiritual and eternal things—we mean the eye of faith.

This duty concerns the view we should take of things temporal and things eternal—not to look at the one, and to look at the other.

AS TO THINGS TEMPORAL, look not so at them as to set your affections upon them, or to esteem them beyond their just value. Make them not your treasure. Let not your reward be upon earth. If you lose them, be not anxious or distressed

at the loss. The Apostle says, *We are troubled on every side, but not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair: persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed....The time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.* (1 Cor. vii. 29—31.) This is the spirit in which we should view this world. Let eternity, with its infinitely more important concerns, keep us from giving too much time to earthly objects, being too axious in the pursuit of them, or too overjoyed in the possession of them, or any thing like the vain thought, *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years.*

All earthly things should be regarded by us, not for what they are in themselves, but as they are a help or hinderance to our happiness in eternity. If we view them through the medium of an eternal state, we shall then see them in their just proportions.

As to ETERNAL THINGS.

Look at them, so as DULY TO ESTIMATE THEM. Calculate, if you can, what is included in the immortality of the soul: weigh the whole world against it, and it outweighs it all; *What shall*

it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? (Mark viii. 36.) Who can tell all the woe of having an immortal soul lost? Estimate again the eternity of God. Is there any end of his power and wisdom, of his holiness and truth, of his grace and love, of his possessions and dominions? Oh, to have this eternal God for your everlasting enemy, what an overwhelming evil! Oh, to have Him for your everlasting friend, what an unspeakable good! Or estimate the ruin of an eternity of future woe. Eternity is the hell of hell, and the horror of the lost. You complain of the various ills of life, you groan under its pain, you are distracted by its sufferings; and trying enough are the varied afflictions and troubles of this world: but these are all sent in a plan of mercy, they are common to God's children; they are all partial and mitigated evils; they come not together, they continue not long. What will it be to have the whole body and the whole soul tormented in unabating anguish for ever and ever! Or, once more, estimate the exceeding and eternal weight of glory: eternity is the heaven of heaven, and the joy of the saved—to be happy for ever. O calculate this in its length, and breadth, and depth, and height, and all other things, in comparison, will sink into insignificance and nothingness.

Look at eternal things, so as EARNESTLY TO FOLLOW YOUR HIGH PRIZE. The Apostle accounted all but loss for this. *Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.... I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* What have you to fly from? A destruction worse than that of the burning cities of the plain. *Escape then, for thy life!* What have you to obtain? Every thing that is excellent and glorious, and that for ever. Oh, then, bend your whole powers to this point—to lay hold on eternal life and glory!

Look at eternal things so as to be FILLED with them. Their surpassing greatness should engage the whole attention of the soul. The eye should be fixed, intently fixed upon them; the heart supremely occupied with them and the whole life regulated by them.

How may this be done? consider lastly,

V. THE PRECIOUSNESS OF CHRIST.

It is only in the glass of eternity that we can properly estimate the unspeakable value of a Saviour, and may it please God the Holy Ghost so to take of the things of Christ as to enable me to set forth this value, and to draw all your hearts to the Lord Jesus.

My brethren, all have sinned. *The wages of sin*

is death, death eternal. God is holy, and God is true. His word cannot fail. He is just and cannot acquit the guilty. Here is your state. You are sinful; you are on the very brink of eternity, and that eternity is a never ceasing flow of wretchedness to the unpardoned. You are lost then; you are lost for ever without Christ. There is not a ray of hope from any other quarter.

But in Christ Jesus the gloom is dissipated, that Sun of Righteousness with cheering beams, sheds light and life, joy and peace, and the full assurance of hope all around. He came, he lived, he died; he rose again and thus completed our redemption, delivering us from the sentence of the law, the penalty of death, and the prison of hell, and obtaining for us the Holy Spirit, free justification, the adoption of sons, the gift of holiness, and the hope of glory. *This is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son, he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life.*

We have then the word of him who inhabiteth eternity, who is from everlasting to everlasting, who is the God and Father of all for ever and ever, that in Christ Jesus there is a security for eternity. There is a solid basis on which you may fix your foot and say, "*I shall not be moved.*" Take then, I beseech you, your stand on the rock

of ages. *Win Christ and be found in him*, and you shall not *perish but have everlasting life.*

Oh! if you have right views of eternity, how will you value Christ? How does the ship-wrecked sailor, clinging with a last grasp to the wreck of the sinking vessel, value the life-boat which pushes through the opposing waves, reaches him in his danger, and rescues him from destruction! How does the inmate of the burning dwelling, surrounded with devouring flames, feel towards him who at the risk of his own life breaks through all difficulties, seizes him in his arms, and brings him to safety! And shall not we value that Saviour, who at so great a cost, rescues us from an infinitely greater danger, and brings us to an infinitely higher and fuller blessedness? Has he said, *I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me?* (John xvii. 24.) Have we been *raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.* (Ephes. ii. 6.) And shall not he, whose love is thus unparalleled and beyond all imagination, be unspeakably dear to us?

The cities of refuge were places of safety for the manslayer, and surely as they ran for their lives, the very sight of the distant towers and walls animated their steps, and they never rested till they reached and entered the place of security.

Let us too fly for refuge to the hope set before us in Christ Jesus.

Imagine the feelings of Noah in the ark; when the heavens gathered black with clouds, and all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, and the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth, covering the highest mountains, and he found his prepared ark safely bearing him up over the universal deluge! Did he not value this ark! Was it not precious to him? and shall not Christ be precious, who shelters us from a more tremendous deluge, and carries us in safety from a world of sin, to a new world wherein dwelleth righteousness. If you know your danger, if you know your refuge, here indeed will be that invaluable good to obtain which you will gladly part with all things else. *To you which believe, he is precious.*

O come to the Saviour; I fail in my whole ministry if I gain not this point, to lead you in secret retirement, in holy determination of will, in sweet reliance of mind, in ardent affection of heart, to venture your everlasting interests on Christ Jesus, and to make Him your righteousness, and Him your strength.

O thou eternal Father, draw by thy Spirit the sinner's heart to Christ! Thy Son hath said, *No man cometh to me except the Father draw him.*

O send now thy Holy Spirit, and let this be the day of thy power; and now may some poor sinners here be made willing to come to thee!

Suffer me to plead with you, yet further, by adding some practical directions arising out of this subject.

Every day PREPARE FOR ETERNITY. This is the great concern of life. Say not you are so busy, you have no time. By this you only shew your unbelief and ignorance. What business is so great as that it may set aside concerns for your salvation! why was life given you? that you might attain a blissful eternity. Why is life continued? that you *may grow up unto him in all things which is the head, even Christ.* (Ephes. iv. 15.) For this you were sent here. For this, all time is allowed you, and God spares you from day to day. O then neglect not this one great business of life. Remember as you go out of time, so you enter, and so you continue in eternity. *Whatever* then *thy hand findeth to do,* in the great work given thee to do, *do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest.* May God then impart his Spirit, day by day, to renew your faith and repentance, and enable you to live each day as if the last. One of old had proclaimed daily in his ears, "Remember, thou art mortal;" but let it rather ever sound in your ear "Remember, that thou art immortal,

and immortal either in woe or bliss, according as thou art saved or lost." O then *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*, for you have a mighty helper, even God himself, who *worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

ABIDE ALWAYS IN CHRIST JESUS. This is one of his last directions to his Disciples. *Abide in me.* This is the only ark in which a sinner can safely and securely pass over the universal ocean of a vast eternity. O my brethren, enter without delay this ark, I beseech you. God grant I may not beseech you in vain. Noah was a preacher of righteousness; he preached to a whole world, and but eight souls entered into the ark. My brethren, be warned by all the past history of the church. You know you must pass into the eternal world. The time is rapidly approaching, here you have no continuing city; you must soon be removed, and the earth itself be removed; there is however a rock in this world which is immoveable in eternity itself, even Christ Jesus. O that I could see you all safely fixed on that rock, believing in Jesus, and abiding in Him! Then let the heavens and earth pass away, let the *hills be removed, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;* you need fear nothing, but exclaim in triumph, *The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.*

Learn on earth THE BLESSED EMPLOYMENT OF

ETERNITY. You must here be made meet for its holy occupations: to enjoy God as your portion and happiness, to do his will only, to praise him unceasingly, and to seek only his glory.

I add one more direction. SEEK also to RESCUE YOUR FELLOW MORTALS from eternal ruin. The world accuses Christians of being too busy with other people's religion, and scornfully asks 'Cannot you let people alone?' I would that the world's accusations were just. Let people alone! yes, let the sleeper in the burning house sleep on till the flames awake him, though you see his danger! let the drowning man, becoming insensible in the water, sink, and never reach out a hand to draw him to the shore; My brethren, we are too insensible about each other's souls. We all say too much as the first murderer did, *Am I my brother's keeper?* Christians, I beseech you, stir up yourselves to seek the salvation of all around you. *If any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins.*

SERMON XI.

HELL.

MATTHEW XXV. 41.

Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

COULD I, my Christian friends, in faithfulness to your souls have passed by, in the course I am now preaching, the subject of the present lecture, I should have rejoiced to have omitted it. But to sound an alarm, to utter the warning voice, to give notice of coming danger, is an essential part of ministerial fidelity and love.

Did we see men in general overwhelmed with the terrors of everlasting ruin, distressed with anxious apprehension, and sinking into despondency under the dread of hell, we might forbear to dwell

upon a subject, in such a case uninviting and unsuitable; then it would be our more agreeable office to proclaim the riches and greatness of the salvation provided in Jesus for those ready to perish. But when we see men, almost without exception, dreading nothing less than the future punishment, wholly secure and unconcerned, regardless and careless of the miseries that are coming upon them; then how guilty must the minister be who warns not the wicked, who shuns to declare the counsel of God; that *upon the wicked, God shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest, this shall be the portion of their cup.* (Psalm xi. 6.)

It is not in the language of severe and hard denunciation that I desire to bring so fearful a subject before you, but in that of tenderest compassion and earnest desire to promote your salvation. I am a poor sinner, even as you; I by nature am *a child of wrath* as you; if I hope to escape, it is only by sovereign grace and mercy in Christ Jesus, and by daily flying to that Saviour who has delivered us from the wrath to come; and, having myself hope in him, can I but long to see you all safe in this refuge? *Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men.* I cannot but fear that there must be before me some who are in imminent peril. O that such may this day be *snatched as brands from the burning!* O that preach-

ing on this subject may warn some to *flee from the wrath to come*, and may renew, in God's children, the feelings of gratitude for their own deliverance!

Christians, lift up your hearts in prayer, that a blessing may be upon us from the Lord this day.

Let us consider—

1. THE PERSONS TO BE PUNISHED,
2. THE CURSE WHICH LIES UPON THEM,
3. THE EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT TO BE ENDURED.

I. THE PERSONS TO BE PUNISHED.

We will notice these characters, the open sinner, the ungodly, and the neglecters of Christ Jesus, which include the various classes of lost souls.

1. THE OPEN SINNER.

The Scriptures are very express on this point, and give us several catalogues, which should furnish all mentioned in them with a distinct and solemn warning of their fearful danger. Thus St. Paul tells the Corinthians, *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abuses of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.* (1 Cor. vi. 9.) So the Apostle

in a similar list tells the Galatians, *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* (Gal. v. 19.) So again he tells the Ephesians (v. 5, 6.) *No whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.* A similar statement is made by St. John, *The fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.* (Rev. xxi.)

Can any thing be more clear than these plain and affecting statements? O, if any of you are living in any of these sins, learn, we beseech you, your real danger.

2. THE UNGODLY.

There are very many who have a highly fair, honourable, and respectable character before their fellow creatures. They are upright in their dealings, moral and decent in their behaviour, and

possibly no charge may justly lie against them for injuries done to others, and much praise be due to them for their usefulness in society. They pride themselves on their character, and had rather lose their property or their life itself, than their reputation for integrity and morality. Yet are these persons, with all this respectability before man, fearfully guilty before God. They are guilty of a crime which they perhaps never suspect, but which is in reality the most enormous crime of which a creature can be guilty—they are living as *without God in the world;* full of regard to man's opinion, wholly regardless of God's opinion; fully alive to man's laws, wholly unconcerned about God's laws; daily slighting and daily rebelling against that merciful Father, from whom they have received all their blessings, and who is profusely shedding, every day, bounties without number all around them. The crime of ungodliness is the iniquity which God lays to their charge. They would be just as upright in their dealings, and as kind and benevolent in their actions, if there were no God in the world. They seek not to do his will, and he *is not in all their thoughts.* We do not undervalue the importance, the respectability, and the usefulness of such characters before men: but if all this be done without any regard to God and his will and his glory, of such the Scripture says, "*the wicked*

shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. (Psalm ix. 17.) *The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.* (2 Thess. i. 7—9.) *Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is heaven.*

Search then your hearts, and try your ways. Is the main bent of your mind to live to God and not to yourselves?

Once more; the NEGLECTERS OF CHRIST.

This is remarkably brought forward in that account of the judgment which immediately follows our text. Why are they bid to depart from Christ; He tells them, *For I was an hungered and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger and ye took me not in; naked and ye clothed me not, sick and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee. Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.* (Matt. xxv. 42—45.)

Observe, they never suspected the sins for which they are condemned. Those sins of omission which were not thought of by them as chargeable upon them, are the very things on account of which heaven is lost. The scripture is remarkable on this point, for its distinctness and repetition. Thus, in this chapter of Matthew, xxv. 30. the sentence concerning the servant, who did not—observe you well—did not squander away, or waste his Lord's talent, but who did not improve it, is, *Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth:* and in Matt. vii. 19. there is a similar mode of expression. It is not the poisonous tree merely that is to be cut down, but *every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire.* (Matt. iii. 10.) If the tree be barren, it is to be burned.

The true reception of Christ makes a man full of zeal and love. All who really trust in Christ are men of grateful and devoted feelings. The love of Christ constrains them, *not to live to themselves, but to him who died for them.* (2 Cor. vi. 15.) He that abides in Him *bears much fruit.* Hence omitted duties become a decisive test of a neglected Saviour. And *how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?* It is the only way left for sinners to escape hell. *There is none other name, given under heaven, whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus. He that believeth not the*

Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. It is therefore, obviously to all, clear from the word of God, that the neglecters of Christ shall perish for ever. Those *without Christ*, as well as those *without God in the world*, are by the scriptures described as *having no hope*.

O affecting truths! Look diligently within, brethren; see whether any of these marks are upon you: and if so, never rest, day nor night, till your soul escape from the overhanging storm of Divine wrath. If to Lot the angel was urgent, when he had only to flee from the danger of a temporal ruin, O with what earnestness should we cry, Escape for thy life! flee from the wrath to come!

But let us consider,

II. THE CURSE WHICH LIES UPON THEM.

The expression, "*Ye cursed,*" is full of meaning.

Let us consider, The curse itself; and, Its developement.

1. THE CURSE ITSELF.

The language is materially varied from the parallel expressions addressed to the righteous; that is, *Ye blessed of my Father;* where the blessing is wholly attributed to the free love and rich grace of the Heavenly Parent. But to the wicked he speaks differently; he does not say, Ye cursed

of God; but simply, *Ye cursed:* for sin is its own curse; it is our own disobedience that is the true root and substance of the curse. The law declares this curse: *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.* (Gal. iii. 10.) The moment a man sins, he sows the seed of the curse, which will more assuredly spring up hereafter than the seed sown in the ground. The curse is upon the soul of every sinner. Though men perceive it not now, yet God's word abideth sure, it can never pass away. The sentence passed at the judgment is not, *Be* cursed; they are, through sin, already cursed, and therefore it is, Go, *ye cursed.*

Yet though, in this view, the curse springs from man's own sin, the evil arising from it, is through the just appointment of a Holy God, and is connected with his righteous wrath. The curse is his awful sentence, condemning the sinner to the full punishment of sin. This curse separates from the divine favour, communion, and blessing, and makes every thing in creation injurious and terrible to him under it. If *the wrath of a king* be *as messengers of death,* what is the wrath of the King of kings? If this wrath be kindled, who can stand before Him? How the prophet Nahum speaks on this subject! *The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burnt at his presence; yea, the world, and*

all that dwell therein. Who can stand before his indignation, and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him. (Nahum i. 5, 6.)

There is but one way of escape; *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse, being made a curse for us.* (Gal. iii. 13.) What then must be the situation of those to whom this way was proclaimed Sabbath after Sabbath, year after year, and they slighted it as of no moment, and they rejected the only Redeemer with the scornful words, *We will not have this man to reign over us*, till there was no remedy. They are left under the curse, and that for ever.

Let us further notice,

2. THE DEVELOPEMENT OF THIS CURSE.

The judgment day is the grand day of manifestation—showing what man and his doings are, and what God is, and for ever shutting the mouths of all who have spoken against God and his ways. *Behold the Lord cometh, with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed; and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.* (Jude 14, 15.)

The scriptures often speak of this full manifestation of every thing in the last day. *Judge*

nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts. (1 Cor. iv. 5.)

We have already considered the opening of the books in the day of judgment; but if it be asked, How can there be time for such a display of all things? How can this display be manifest to all? We reply, Nothing is impossible with God. What, if by the immediate operation of divine light and power, all the defects of our memory being removed, there be laid open to every man's recollection, at one glance, all the course of his past life,—and our memory be so quickened, restored, and strengthened, that all the thoughts, words, and works of our whole lives, are presented at once to our minds! What if all our past sins thus rush into the immediate view of the soul, and it be laid open to all the alarms of a conscience awakened to the full and even present and terrible recollection of every committed sin! This is of itself enough to overwhelm and daunt the stoutest heart. This is a *worm that never dieth.*

But this is not all. It is not merely by our own conscience that our past sins will thus be instantaneously and prominently seen,—they will also all be thus visible to an assembled world. *There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed;*

neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness, shall be heard in the light. (Luke xii. 2, 3.) As in the case of the first murderer, Cain, *The Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him,* (Gen. iv. 15); so we may suppose there will be the marks of sin committed on earth, visible and obvious to every eye, on every lost soul.

And this manifestation of once secret and hidden sins shall be eternal, that thus the lost sinner may have stamped upon him, through eternity, the equity of his final condemnation. None of the lost shall be able for one moment to speak against the purity and equity of that sentence which dooms them to eternal woe,

But this is a subject that requires illustration. Let us endeavour to trace out the developement of the curse still further.

First observe WHAT DISAPPEARS FROM THE SIGHT.

And here I speak not of grandeur, titles, riches, honours; though all these things will for ever have vanished: or rather not have vanished, that is what the wicked would wish, but have changed to them their very nature, and become the causes of shame, and contempt, and everlasting sorrow. That title in which the wicked man gloried, will be his aggravated condemnation; those riches in the possession of which he trusted, nay boasted, will be his everlasting perdition.

But of these I speak not, but of those things in which you once confided as ground of hope; such as these:—All false rules of judgment respecting your state, for instance, that you were not worse than your neighbours, and that your hearts were still good; all the approbation of your fellow creatures which led you to think that you were safe; all the examples of others around you from which you formed your sentiments of right and wrong; all the false appearance of good works which were good before man, but being done from mere worldly motives, such as desire of man's praise, regard to present and earthly good, and the like, were not good before God; all works of charity done to merit heaven, and entitle you to claim God's acceptance. These refuges of your own conceit, these superstructures of hay, straw, and stubble, will all be consumed.

What! will all those good works which wicked men may have done vanish away and be annihilated? No, even worse will the issue of them be. They will be exhibited in their real character; the show of good will be stripped from them. Their prayers will be seen to be solemn mockery of God, and their alms a proud insult upon his sovereignty; all their hopes become their shame: *the gold becomes dim, the silver is become dross.* (Lam. iv. 1—Isa. i. 22.)

But if the good works of sinners disappear from the sight. Let us consider,

WHAT APPEARS PROMINENT.

Those sins which they had entirely forgotten and lost sight of, awake as it were from a long sleep, and rise in all their horror and malignity and vileness, without subterfuge or excuse to cover them.

It has been thus illustrated. Suppose a man to be taken with this absurd fancy. He has a large room in his house in which he dwells, and he darkens this room. He then employs himself day after day in filling this room with wasps and hornets, vipers and serpents. Suppose further, that as soon as these noxious creatures are placed there, they become torpid and do not annoy him, and he forgets that they were there. At length the room is nearly filled; and then the window shutters are suddenly opened; and all these venomous creatures recover at once from their torpor, receive fresh life, and attack this man and wound him from head to foot, stinging him in every part with the unutterable anguish of their poisoned darts and fangs.

This is a picture of what shall happen to the worldly man and of what he is doing. Sin is the wasp and the hornet, the viper and the serpent. The room is his conscience; he is daily filling this room with some sin or other: the

torpor is our forgetfulness of sin, the bursting open of the windows is the hour of death, and in eternity the ceaseless stings of all the vain thoughts, idle words, neglected duties, and multiplied iniquities of our lives will for ever wound and torment our souls.

Sin now appears to be but a little evil, attended with no material consequences, and soon forgotten; but then it will appear in its real malignity and abomination, in its exceeding sinfulness. We shall see in more just proportions the glorious majesty of God, and how intolerable it is that such a creature as man is, should scorn the great and eternal God, should neglect and disregard the Almighty Creator, on whom he depends for life and breath and all things. We shall see what tremendous confusion sin produces in the whole of creation, and if once permitted with impunity, what terrible disorder, what ruins and devastation it would bring through the universe; we shall see that its bent is to dethrone God. We shall then see more of the spotless purity of God's justice, how impartial, and perfect, and holy he is! how he cannot look upon iniquity, and how glorious God is, in thus hating all sin, and we shall be enfolded in what we then discern to be the vileness of sin. The unutterable regret for rejected invitations, and the bitter, but unavailing repentance

for lost opportunities, will be another part of hell torments.

Then also will appear in its just magnitude, what eternity is. We never understand it now, or we could not be so engrossed in this world. But O the sorrow of a suffering eternity! Have you never observed that while joyful times pass very quickly, suffering times seem vastly longer. Job felt this when he said, *Wearisome nights are appointed to me. When I lie down I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone.* (Job vii. 3, 4.) But all the sufferings of God's children are in this life, and therefore temporary. O what will be the wearisome agony of a *suffering* eternity!

But I stop—My brethren, what a curse is sin! Do you say, God is merciful? O yes, merciful beyond our utmost thoughts. There are heights and depths in his mercy beyond our largest conceptions; *'as the heaven is high above the earth so great is his mercy towards them that fear him.* (Psalm ciii. 11.) But his mercy to the good requires the punishment of the bad. Do you say that the punishment is too great for the crime? Ah! remember, that the criminal is ever an unfit judge of the law which he has broken, and of the sentence by which he suffers.

Make not one vain excuse; acknowledge without equivocation, that you do for your evil deeds worthily deserve to be punished; fly at once to

the Lord Jesus; there is no way of escape but in him. But O the rich and full glories of the Gospel of our Lord Christ! In him there is a complete salvation. He by his sufferings has made full satisfaction for all your sins, he has removed the curse by bearing it for you. He by his obedience has wrought out a perfect righteousness. O that you were wise, and understood this! Were you not wrapped up in the darkness of sin, you would neither give sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids, until you had hope of deliverance, and would indeed count every thing but loss, to *win Christ, and be found in him.* (Phil. iii. 8.)

Christians, can you bless God enough, day by day, if you have seen your ruin by nature, and you have been turned to God, and are *waiting for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come?*

SERMON XII.

HELL.

MATTHEW XXV. 41.

Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

On this soul-stirring and alarming subject, we have already preached one Sermon, in which we proposed to consider it under three heads.—1. The persons to be punished. 2. The curse which lies upon them. 3. The everlasting punishment to be endured. We pointed out the persons to be punished under three characters: the open sinner, the ungodly, and the neglecters of Christ Jesus:—and the curse which lies upon them in two views; the curse itself, and the developement of that curse under what disappears and what appears prominent. But O how wonderful is our

hardness and insensibility to these things! If you heard that your house had taken fire, and the flames were spreading from room to room, how it would agitate you! But you can hear of eternal flames unmoved and unaffected. This shews how true is the scriptural account of man as dead in sin. There remains to consider,

III. THE EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT TO BE ENDURED.

The wicked go away into everlasting punishment.

The punishment of which we now speak, is the punishment to be inflicted on the wicked after the day of judgment. And in order to have distinct views, remember there is, to the righteous dying in the Lord, a double state of blessedness, a paradise before the judgment day, as well as the glory of heaven after the judgment day. There is also to the wicked dying in sin, a double state of misery, a hell before the day of judgment, and after that judgment the lake of fire and brimstone, in which the wicked are tormented for ever and ever. It is said by Job (xxi. 30,) *The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction, they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.* And Peter declares, *The Lord knoweth how.....to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.* (2 Peter ii. 9.) They are now in the prison of hell, where the rich man was cast on his death,

and they are there with the fallen angels, *delivered into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.*

What that judgment is, we have now to consider. I will point out,

1. THE JUDGE WHO SENTENCES THEM,
2. THE LOSS OF GOOD,
3. THE SUFFERING OF WOE,
4. THE ACCURSED SOCIETY,
5. THE PERPETUAL PUNISHMENT.

1. THE JUDGE WHO SENTENCES THEM.

Here is the first fearful part of the woe. There is but one Saviour for lost sinners even now. There is but one Mediator and Advocate. He is tender, he is full of compassion; but this very Being becomes the awful Judge. *The wrath of Him that sitteth on the throne,* is *the wrath of the Lamb.* (Rev. vi. 16.) If it were a cruel tyrant who sentenced them, there would be less ground for despair and horror. But it is one whose love is as unquestionable as his justice. He who left his Father's glory, who emptied himself of divine fulness, and took upon him the form of a servant, to die, that sinners might not die eternally, he must love man. He who wears our nature, must know our frame, and therefore must be an equitable Judge. And yet such is his truth, his purity, and his holiness, that from his own mouth pro-

ceeds the unutterably dreadful doom, *Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*

O when I think how the sinner will at the last day tremble in his presence; and look now at the way in which he slights and despises him, I am struck with amazement at his present unconcern. Talk to men now about subjection to Christ, they mock at you as enthusiasts; but O the day will come, when the remembrance of a dishonoured Christ will cut the heart with bitterest regret. 'O my madness!' will the lost soul say, 'Christ was proclaimed in my ears, I was invited to come to receive freely from him salvation. He was a sufficient Redeemer, but now the only possible Redeemer, is my judge, my sentencer, my condemner for ever.'

Mark again the punishment as it consists in privation; or,

2. THE LOSS OF GOOD.

This is implied in that fearful word depart,—*Depart from me.*

Our Lord frequently thus describes the condition of the lost. (Matt. vii. 23.) *Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, yé that work iniquity.* So we are told, Psalm v. 5, *The foolish shall not stand in thy sight; thou hatest all workers of iniquity.*

Now, to understand this, remember that sinners

can have nothing, and hope for nothing from a holy God, but through the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only channel by which any good, either for our souls, or our bodies, for time or for eternity can come to us. But this Mediator has been rejected and despised by those on whom this sentence is denounced. They would not have Christ for their Saviour, they would not have spiritual blessings through him; they would not acknowledge that their worldly good was given through him. Most justly then is all good taken away. ALL THE GOOD OF THIS WORLD, its riches, honours, and pleasures; its health and vigour, its cheerfulness and mirth, its ease, independence, security, and comfort, all, all are then lost. The ALLEVIATIONS ALSO OF THIS WORLD'S EVILS, are there removed. There is disease from head to foot, but no medicine, no physician, no healing balm; there is malice, hatred, revenge, wrath, and enmity to the uttermost, but no love and forgiveness, no friend to protect and comfort; there is shame and contempt without measure, but no respect, and honour, and approbation.

ALL SPIRITUAL AND HEAVENLY JOYS ARE LOST. The favour and love of Almighty God, and all the joys of the light of his countenance, and the beaming eye of his tenderness which ever delight the souls of the blessed,—the blissful sight of Christ, and the abode with him, who feeds his

people, and leads them to the heavenly springs, and by the fountains of living waters, all, all is lost! *They shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.* (2 Thess. i. 9.) The society of the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the triumph of the noble army of martyrs, and the glory of the holy church universal, are for ever lost! O unconverted sinners, before it be too late, think of that place where there shall be no light, no joy; think what it will be to see *Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob,* and all the prophets *in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.* (Luke xiii. 28.) O to be shut out of those joyful and happy regions, and shut up with the wicked for ever! *For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh* a lie. (Rev. xxii. 15.) Here is of itself a hell. By their present miserable want of it, they know too late the value of the blessedness.

All this loss too is ascribable to themselves; it is their own fault. *They said unto God, depart from us, and what can the Almighty do for us?* (Job xxii. 17.) and voluntarily chose that loss under which they smart. Suppose a man comes into the possession of a large estate, with a still richer reversion in reserve; suppose by prodigality and wastefulness he squanders both away;

and suppose, reduced to the lowest state of wretchedness and want, he beholds all the estate and reversion in the possession of one whom he despised; surely he must painfully and remorsefully bewail his folly:—thus foolish is the unconverted sinner now; and thus will he bewail his loss of heaven, only with inconceivable aggravation of sorrow according to the unsearchable greatness of his loss.

Those who once said, as the Gadarenes did to Christ, *Depart from us:* will not again see the Saviour till they hear him say, *Depart from me*, and all their loss is irreparable; to them *the midst of darkness is reserved for ever.*

3. THE SUFFERING OF WOE.

This is expressed in the word "*fire;*" the most acute suffering we know upon earth being that occasioned by fire. The original expression is emphatically the fire, the everlasting fire: as if all other fires were but figures compared with this last great fire of divine wrath.

Do we conclude then that there will be real and material fire? there may or there may not be; we presume not to decide what may be the exact nature of that punishment, the sharpness of which this term represents, but those objections which are sometimes brought against material fire, are not really conclusive. If it be said, the rich man was in hell immediately on his death,

and fire hurts not disembodied spirits, more is said than can be proved; fire only now hurts the mind, from the connection which God has established between the body and the soul; and it may please him to establish a constitution by which the disembodied spirit may also suffer there from fire. The body shall also be raised, and the body and soul of the wicked are to be alike the subjects of future torment.

It is perfectly clear, however, that it must denote exquisite suffering, even extremity of pain, and that the whole man will thus suffer. There is a *place* of torment for the body; Judas went *to his own place.* (Acts i. 25.) There is a *state* of torment for the soul. And O how unutterable that torment, when whichever way the soul look, there is nothing but tribulation and anguish! If it look back on the past, it sees time wasted away, opportunity for ever lost, enjoyment irrecoverably gone, folly irremediably and eternally ruinous. If it looks within and around, fiery flames, unmitigated pain, *the worm that never dies.* If it looks to the future, O that fearful look, judgment to come, wrath to come, and that for ever.

The wicked fall into the hands of the living God, and he is said *to shew his wrath, and to make his power known on the vessels fitted for destruction.* (Rom. ix. 22.) O terrible words! Sinners, unconverted sinners, fear above all, fear to fall into

the hands of the living God. Think of his power, it is almighty. Think of his wrath, it is infinite.

But there is one thing further that should peculiarly alarm nominal Christians. There are degrees of punishment in hell, and there is special aggravation of suffering to the specially wicked; and those are accounted specially wicked who had Christian advantages and neglected them. Thus our Lord says, *That servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.* (Luke xii. 47.) Thus Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum enjoyed the light of the gospel, but disregarded it, and our Lord says, *It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment.* (Luke x. 12.) O nominal Christians, flee, we beseech you, from the wrath to come. You will wish that you had been born a Hottentot or New Zealender, or any thing rather than to have had all the aggravated guilt of neglecting the full privileges of a Christian land.

4. THE ACCURSED SOCIETY.

It is prepared for the Devil and his angels.

Here is another tremendous part of the sinner's doom.—It is *prepared.* For six thousand years those fires have been preparing, and materials have been gathering together. God has had the disposal of every brand. How Isaiah says, xxx.

33. *Tophet is ordained of old, yea, for the King,* (even the King of Kings) *it is prepared. He hath made it deep and large, the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.*

And then what is the company—Devils and evil spirits. Ah! to be associated with those cruel, malignant, and hateful beings, who first tempted, and then will laugh and mock us, taunt us, and torment us, is indeed woe. To be associated, for ever too, with liars and murderers, thieves, drunkards, and adulterers! Those who have forgotten God, may have been disgusted with gross sinners, and yet now to be for ever joined with the most vile and abandoned, and linked with them for ever in the one prison of hell, this is an aggravation of misery that no mind can adequately conceive. The wicked may be pleasant enough to the wicked in their mirth, but will they like each other as companions for ever in torment?

5. THE PERPETUAL PUNISHMENT.

The suffering is eternal and unreversible. This God does most plainly assert: he calls it in our text, *everlasting fire.* It is also contrasted with the reward of the righteous. *These shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal,* v. 46.

The strongest terms are repeatedly used on

this point. It is said by our Lord, (Mark ix. 43—48.) *If thy hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched,* and this is in substance repeated again and again, so as to have in a few verses, six solemn assertions of the eternal duration of the future punishment. So we find by Jude 7. The wicked shall suffer *the vengeance of eternal fire.* In Rev. xiv. 10, 11, we read that he who receives the mark of the beast, shall *drink of the wine of the wrath of God which is poured out without measure into the cup of his indignation, and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb, and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.*

Thus God has expressly declared, that the punishment of the wicked shall be everlasting. How then is that punishment to be ended? By force? What! overpower omnipotence? By fraud? What! outwit infinite wisdom? By exhaustion? Can any thing be annihilated? What! in contradiction to the divine will!

But is it not unjust to visit upon a temporary sin an eternal woe? Ah! do you not even in this world see men suffer lasting evils from a momentary sin. If it be necessary for God to threaten,

it is right for God to execute, and the necessity of the threatening is proved; as even the tremendous penalty does not deter many from the sin, and though multitudes are warned, and escape the coming wrath, multitudes still go on in sin notwithstanding every threatening.

But it may relieve the Christian's doubts of the divine veracity on this fearful subject, to remember that our obligations to God being infinite, life and death being placed before us, and the wicked voluntarily choosing death, justly merit the awful penalty. They remain impenitent in hell itself, they go on sinning there, and if they had lived here for ever, they would have gone on sinning for ever; God is clear when he judges, and even those who suffer will be constrained to justify him who condemns them to eternal woe.

In the vast extent of God's creation, when we look abroad on the starry firmament, and see worlds upon worlds, what if there be one region like a prison, where the Just Governor of the whole universe confines criminals, as a moral lesson to the universe, a guard against rebellion, and a preservative to obedience? Can you say that this may not be in infinite wisdom, equity, and love?

But, mainly and chiefly, hell is the mirror which displays the glories of his power, and truth, and justice, and holiness. *Hath he said,*

and shall he not do it? O risk not eternal ruin on the most improbable of all contingencies, the chance that God may lie and deceive, or rather on the utter impossibility that he should do so.

Do you say it is severe? Ah! remember the assertion flies back. Be not so severe to yourselves, as to rush upon it for vain pleasures; wrong not, destroy not, your own selves; you are forewarned, and yet you hasten to the ruin; it is distinctly laid before you, and yet you prefer it to self-denial, faith, hope, and love.

The voice of the whole sermon is, *Flee from the wrath to come.* Linger not a moment on the plain. Escape, *escape for thy life,* lest thou be consumed; escape to the only city of refuge, even Christ Jesus.

In applying this, I would add two or three plain directions.

1. DREAD SIN AS THE WORST OF ALL EVILS. Losses of property are evils; poverty and contempt are evils; sicknesses in our persons or families are evils; national calamities are evils; wars and famines and pestilences are evils; but sin is the worst evil, for it is the cause of all others; bringing down upon the creature the displeasure and wrath of him from whose appointment all suffering originally comes, as well as all happiness, and, if having its full issue, landing the sinner in endless ruin. O sinner, stop in thy

mad course: sin will be thy ruin here and for ever, if persisted in.

2. REPENT IN TIME. There is a way of escape; there is space afforded for a change of mind. *Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out,* (Acts iii. 19.) ere it be too late. You want a changed mind, consisting in a deep sorrow for sin, a hearty acknowledgment of it before God, a lively faith in his free pardon through the blood of Jesus, and then an amended life in righteousness and true holiness. You must be born again, and God has promised, if you will inquire of him, to give a new heart and a new spirit. O can you be content to receive all your good in this life, and to be miserable for ever; but *except you repent, you must perish.* Turn you then to that Divine Saviour who gives repentance and remission of sins. (Acts v. 31.) *Turn you, for why will you die?* This leads me to

VALUE CHRIST JESUS SUPREMELY as the giver of all you need, (Psalm lxviii. 18.) the only refuge, the all-sufficient Saviour of the lost. Are you yet impenitent and unconverted? O value Christ, as able to give you repentance, and exalted for this very purpose. He came into the world to be the deliverer from the wrath to come; He yet lives to make intercession for the transgressors. Apply to him. You are yet in the land of prayer and of hope: you are yet within the

possibility of salvation; it may be, you may yet reach the good land afar off, and gain everlasting light, and life, and glory; it shall be, if you do in earnest go to Jesus, with all your sins, and trust in him.

Are you trusting in Jesus, and converted to God? blessed is your state! *There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* (Rom. viii. 1.) Christians can say of him, *He hath delivered us from the wrath to come.* (1 Thess. i. 10.) They can stand on the rock of divine truth, amidst all the raging storm of wrath rushing on the ungodly, and be in perfect security, under *the hiding-place from the wind, and the covert from the tempest.* (Isaiah xxxii. 2.) *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* (Rom. viii. 33.) He who has the keys of death and hell, is their friend, and none can hurt or annoy. O Christians, may gratitude to your Redeemer, and tender compassion for perishing sinners, and persevering endeavours to lead them to your Protector and Deliverer, bear testimony that you are the redeemed of the Lord, whom he hath delivered out of the hand of the enemy, and formed for himself a people to show forth his praise!

SERMON XIII.

HEAVEN.

REVELATION XXII. 3—5.

And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever.

IMMORTAL beings, here is the prize of your high calling! Here is the glorious recompense held out for your attainment. To assist you to gain this is the noble object of the Christian ministry. For this we are ambassadors of Christ to you; and if you ask, May such sinful creatures as we have such a hope? our commission reaches every

one of you; Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. O that you and I may together attain this holy and eternal happiness!

We have now to consider this—the inheritance of the saints, the state of heavenly happiness and glory. May the Divine Spirit elevate our thoughts, and reveal to us *the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* (1 Cor. ii. 10.)

Do you ask, Is such a state attainable by fallen sinful creatures? May I reach those happy regions? I will also ask you one question. Do you really so desire it as to follow the divine directions for its attainment? Are you made willing by the Divine Spirit to sacrifice every thing that would interfere with your progress towards, and preparation for it? If indeed this be so, then I reply, It is not only attainable by you, but you already have the blessing. (1 John v. 24.) Not one shall honestly, heartily, and enduringly seek this glory in God's appointed method, and fail of success. O that God the Holy Ghost may so teach us that the consideration of the subject may excite in all the holy ambition of being for ever blessed in the presence of Him in whose presence is fulness of joy.

This blessedness comprises,

1. THE ENTIRE REMOVAL OF EVIL,
2. THE FULL POSSESSION OF GOOD,
3. DELIGHTFUL OCCUPATION,

4. THE BEATIFIC VISION,
5. PERPETUAL GLORY.

I. THE ENTIRE REMOVAL OF EVIL.

Without this no happiness can be complete; whatever good there may be, as long as any admixture of evil remains, there is a root of bitterness, which would disturb and trouble the pure streams of enjoyment.

This part of our future happiness we can the better comprehend. It is brought before us under two terms, *no curse*, and *no night there.*

1. THERE WILL BE NO CURSE THERE. No remains of God's displeasure nor anger—not one frown on his brow. There will be nothing to occasion a curse; not one sin remaining, no temptation will be presented before us, nor ever ruffle our peaceful minds; no conflict with indwelling corruption; no warfare with any spiritual enemy. Not one spiritual enemy will be there. From that happy kingdom of light and love, Satan and all his emissaries and followers are for ever excluded. Nor is there any ensnaring world to seduce, nor deceitful heart to betray, nor an evil thought engendered within nor suggested from without. There is therefore nothing to call down the curse.

Nor is there any of God's anger on account o our past sins. Then in its fullest sense will it be

true, *Though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.* (Isa. xii. 1.) As there is no condemnation on God's part, so there are no accusations of conscience on the sinner's part. That promise will be fulfilled, *Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.* (Micah vii. 19.) The soul, adorned with the Redeemer's beauties, and enriched with the lovely graces of his Spirit, takes up the inspiring strain, *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.* (Isa. lxi. 10.)

All those temporal sufferings, which follow the curse, will also for ever have terminated. *There is no pain* there. (Rev. xxi. 4.) *The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick.* (Isa. xxxiii. 24.) And as no disease invades the human frame, so there is no death there. (Rev. xxi. 4.) *They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.* (Rev. vii. 16.) Thus there is no sickness, and the body is freed from all those weaknesses and infirmities which weigh it down, and depress and burden it here. *It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.* (1 Cor. xv.)

All those beings who are under the curse will be for ever removed. Now the Christian is day by day *vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked;* (2 Peter ii. 7.) *rivers of tears run down his eyes, because men keep not God's laws;* (Psalm cix. 136.) he sees the God whom he serves dishonoured, his laws trampled upon, his day profaned, and the ungodly triumphing: but no sinner shall stand *in the congregation of the righteous* there (Psalm i. 5.) —all are of one heart and one mind.

In hell, all curses meet, concentrate, and there are confined: And why is it otherwise in heaven? how can sinners ever reach those celestial heights? why do they, once defiled with sin, but now free from all sin, dwell in those holy places where enters nothing that defileth? The reason is this, they were among those *looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life;* (Jude 21.) he kept them *from falling*, and presented them *faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.* (Jude 24.)

Would you be free from all curse! O look to him, who alone has redeemed you; who alone can redeem you from the curse.

2. THERE WILL BE NO NIGHT THERE.

No absence from God, the true light, nor any of the evils consequent on that. If here we find the night as well as the day a blessing, it is because we need its quiet and repose—it is on

account of our infirmities. If perfectly happy and unwearied, night would only be an interruption depriving us of a portion of our bliss.

Truly *the light is sweet:* it spreads beauty and glory in its track over regions, which without it are all gloom and obscurity. But the brightest day on earth, with all its lovely scenes, its waving corn, its verdant fields, its peaceful rivers, glittering in the sun, and all the richness of the expanded prospect, beaming with light and beauty, are but as the dark night compared with the surpassing glory of the heavenly day. *The night,* says the Apostle, speaking of this life, *the night is far spent, the day is at hand.* (Rom. xiii. 12.)

And truly there will be no occasion for night there. Our bodies will be too powerful and active, and strong, either to admit of fatigue, or to require rest. We shall be too happy to desire for a moment, cessation or change. Those who have *washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,* are *before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple,* (Rev. vii. 14.) they rest not from their blissful employment.

The expression, *no night,* seems more immediately to convey the idea of the absence of all evils incident to a state of darkness, whether spiritual or temporal. There will be no sinful ignorance, no error in our conceptions of things. There will be no guilt desiring darkness to veil

its criminal conduct; no concealment requisite to hide any thing from observation; no danger of deviating from the right path, nor reason to dread the approach of enemies to invade our tranquillity.

In the Divine dispensations on earth, there have been darker and brighter days. The Jewish Dispensation compared with the Gospel was a time of shade and darkness. The middle ages were dark ages—but in all Dispensations as contrasted with the state of heavenly glory, *now we see through a glass darkly.* In that glorious rest there is the brightness of one everlasting day—a cloudless and eternal lustre, with full capability of body and mind for all its glory.

As in hell there is *the blackness of darkness,* (Jude 13.) and all is night for ever; so in heaven there is the noon-day blaze, and that for ever. Every thing that is dark and ignorant, with all the sorrows of an earthly state, is gone; *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.* (Rev. xxi. 4.)

Thus is every evil entirely removed; and even in this negative view, does not heaven, my brethren, present something unspeakably attractive and engaging? But it comprises—

II. THE FULL POSSESSION OF GOOD.

Two expressions point out this,—*the throne of God and of the Lamb is there, and the Lord God giveth them light.*

I would consider this in two views: the manifestation of God's glory, and the light which he imparts.

THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD'S GLORY.

In the first verse of the chapter we read of *a pure river of water of life, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb:* which seems to be more especially intended to point out the quickening and purifying communications of the Holy Ghost, of which our Saviour speaks, under the same figure of *rivers of living waters.* (John vii. 37—39.)

In the presence and enjoyment of the triune Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, consists the complete possession of all good. Heavenly happiness is being present with the glorious God, and fully enjoying him as our portion and reward. We know what a difference it makes to have with us a beloved earthly friend; how children rejoice in the love and presence of a tender mother; and the wife in the society of a beloved husband; and the friend in the intercourse of an endeared and earthly friend; and those greatly indebted to a benefactor in his continued regard and kindness: and how quickly time flies away in such converse.

But O what will it be when without alloy we see our best parent, our true husband, our greatest benefactor, our greatest friend, face to face, and dwell with him for ever!

The scriptures represent this as the distinguishing privilege of heaven. Our Lord says, *I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also:* (John xiv. 3.) and in his prayer to his Father, he offers up this ardent and glowing petition, *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.* (John xvii. 24.) And so he assured the penitent thief on the cross, *To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.* (Luke xxiii. 43.)

The same hopes are continually expressed by the people of God. *Having a desire,* says St. Paul, *to depart and be with Christ, which is far better;* (Phil. i. 23.) and speaking of Christians he says, *We are confident and willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord;* (2 Cor. v. 8.) *and so shall we ever be with the Lord; wherefore comfort ye one another with these words.* (1 Thess. iv. 17, 18.)

Let the miser rejoice in the possession of unsubstantial wealth; let the sensualist have his momentary joy; let the ambitious, or the man of science, or of human wisdom, pride themselves in

the attainment of their several objects; O what is their happiness compared with that of him who has for his portion, the God of true riches, of true glory, of true pleasures, and can bathe in that ocean of Divine fulness for ever and ever!

Now, we do not see God on his throne. Beautiful as our world may be, the earth is but his footstool; and though he does reign, still, it is not apparent to the eye of sense. Wicked men seem to prosper, the enemies of God seem to have the upper hand. When our Lord was on earth, though spiritual eyes beheld his glory, *the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;* (John i. 14.) he was not seated on the throne, but was despised and rejected of men. When God was worshipped in his temple at Jerusalem, there was but the typical outward service, the figure of the true; and though in the holy of holies on the mercy seat, there were symbols of the Divine presence; still was he not *seen as he is.* In the temple, mentioned in Ezekiel, the waters flowed from under the *threshhold,* (Ezek. xlvii. 1—12.) emblematic of the more distant communion we have now with God; but in heaven they flow directly from the *throne.* For there God is visibly seen as the sovereign, reigning not only with undisputed, but with universally acknowledged and manifested, unspeakably glorious, delightful and joyful empire over that happy world.

The language of every blessed spirit there, not in distant hope, but in actual and full possession, is—*In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.* (Psalm xvi. 11.)

THE LIGHT WHICH GOD IMPARTS.

They need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light.

We will notice what they have no need of, and what they possess.

WHAT THEY NEED NOT. *They need no candle;* that is, no borrowed or artificial light, invented to supply the absence of a better and greater. All human means are imperfect; all sensible things to supply our necessities, as they are but remedies for defects, so they are themselves defective. The clothes that protect us from the cold, wear out and need to be renewed; the fire that warms, consumes away in the very act of communicating warmth; the food that nourishes, is destroyed in affording that nourishment; the candle in shedding its light, gradually wastes away; and all these helps are but imperfect and incomplete, and therefore, when that which is perfect comes, that which is in part shall be done away.

They need no sun—that is, no indirect light through the creatures of God. We know God now by his works. We see him through sensible images; *the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work; day*

unto day uttereth speech, night unto night sheweth knowledge. (Psalm xix. 12.)

Tell them I AM, Jehovah said
To Moses, while earth shook with dread;
And smitten to the heart,
At once above, beneath, around,
All nature without voice, or sound,
Replied, O Lord! THOU ART.

There is the still greater light of Revelation; the light of grace, which tells us much of God, that we could never discern in the book of creation.

A glory gilds the sacred page,
Majestic as the sun;
It gives a light to every age—
It gives but borrows none.

But the light of glory transcends all these. Let us consider then, WHAT THEY POSSESS. *The Lord God giveth them light.* He enlightens them directly from himself: no borrowed light from his works, no teaching of the creature, but direct and immediate from the Creator himself—*in thy light shall we see light.*

Many and inestimable are the blessings which are comprehended in this gift. It seems more

especially to denote knowledge, holiness, and happiness.

There will be PERFECT KNOWLEDGE there. This is according to that statement, *now I know in part, but then shall I know even also as I am known.* Now our greatest blessings are apprehended only by faith, but then they will be actually ours by sight and enjoyment. Now, what time it takes to learn to read! what patience and application to acquire knowledge! what loss of health to become extensively learned! But there at a glance we shall take in more knowledge than years of study and experience can give the most laborious student here. We shall see them intuitively and at once. All that which is dark and obscure as the thick night, will have the broad light of day shed over it. We shall see the beauty of God's ways, the infinite wisdom, and the boundless love displayed in our heaviest sorrows and severest trials. *What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.* O the glories of that history of histories, the developing and unfolding of the providential dispensations of God towards his people! We shall hold personal converse with the glorified objects of them—with Enoch, and Noah, and Moses, and all the saints of God; and what a knowledge will this give, of the wonders of Divine wisdom, truth, grace, and love. And each saint in glory will be as a mirror re-

flecting another and another view of the graces, beauties, and glories of Immanuel.

PERFECT HOLINESS is another part of the light there fully given. *God is light, and in him is no darkness at all,* and in those happy regions it is in the highest sense true, *we walk in the light as he is in the light.* There will not be one sin left to defile us. O the blessedness of entire freedom from every sin! When that galling yoke of bondage is not only eased but withdrawn, and the last Egyptian, as it were, is seen dead on the sea shore, with what exultation shall we sing, *The Lord is my strength and song; he is become my salvation!* (Exod. xv. 2.) Never can the Christian have fulness of joy while one sin remains; but *when Christ shall appear,* and *we shall be like him,* and when that perfect *holiness* which *becomes* God's *house for ever,* is ours, then shall the enlarged mind of the believer be completely filled, *Then shall I be satisfied when I awake up after thy likeness.*

PERFECT HAPPINESS is also included in this expression, *Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.* (Psalm xcvii. 11.) Here, even in the very seed time, there is a present reward, *in keeping* God's *commandments,* but when we come to reap the harvest of joy, O what joy must that be which is called by God himself *fulness of joy.* Our best joys here are transitory and limited; but there will be unlimited, bound-

less, and eternal joy. See the glorious throng—observe the palms in their hands, and the crowns on their heads, behold them arrayed in the white garments before the throne. Who are these? They are the redeemed of the Lord—*they come with singing to Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain,* they shall for ever possess, *gladness and joy—and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.* (Isaiah xxxv. 10.)

But they take up their golden harps, they begin one of the heavenly songs, the number of those who join is *ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,* and the grand united chorus of all is *Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.* (Rev. v. 13.)

And as all their happiness flows directly from God, so it is unceasing and secure. *The Lord giveth;* there is an incessant flow of knowledge, and holiness, and happiness.

O how triumphant and enrapturing, the song of praise raised by the heavenly host in the full enjoyment of all this blessedness! "With what life and alacrity will the saints in their blessed communion exalt the object of their love and praise! The seraphim about the throne cry out to one another, to express their zeal and joy in celebrating his eternal purity and power, and the glory of his goodness. O the unspeakable plea-

sure of this concert, when every soul is harmonious, and contributes his full part to the music of heaven! Could we hear but some echo of those songs, wherewith the heaven of heavens resounds, some remains of those voices wherewith the saints above triumph in the praises and in the solemn adoration of the King of Spirits, how would it inflame our desires to be joined with them! *Blessed are those that are in thy house, they always praise thee.*

O that I could in any way stir up all earnestly and zealously to seek heaven. Honestly and heartily turn your back on this world and all its sins, and set your faces to Zion, and you shall reach those heavenly heights, and arrive at that blessed city, whose *walls are salvation, and all her gates praise.* Count all but loss for this, and stretch every nerve, if by any means you may be counted worthy to attain this glory.

SERMON XIV.

HEAVEN.

REVELATION XXII. 3—5.

And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it: and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

COULD heavenly happiness be seen in all its blessedness, there would be no room for the full exercises of faith, and comparatively little display of the excellence of divine grace in the hope, and patience, and holiness of God's people. To exercise faith, it is only revealed in prospect, to

excite hope, it is but partially developed, and it *doth not yet appear what we shall be.*

We proposed to consider, 1. The entire removal of evil: 2. The full possession of good: 3. The delightful occupation: 4. The beatific vision: 5. The perpetual glory enjoyed. The two former of these we have already explained. We proceed to consider,

III. THE DELIGHTFUL OCCUPATION.

His servants shall serve him.

Notice THE GLORIOUS BEING WHO IS SERVED.

The King of Kings: the ever-living God. It is not clear whether the sacred writer designed to refer to the Father or the Son; nor is it at all material. There is a perfect unity. *He that honoureth the Son, honoureth the Father also.* The Being served is he to whom all service alone is due. Created by his power, redeemed by his blood, sanctified by his Spirit, shall they not for ever consecrate every power to him whose they are, and to whom all they can render is infinitely due! According to the rank of the master, is the elevation of the servant; to be in the immediate service of the King is thought a high office; what is it immediately to serve the Lord God omnipotent!

Notice next HIS SERVANTS.

What were they! once vile miserable sinners,

alienated from God, and his enemies by wicked works; but they heard of *the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness,* (Zech. xiii. 1.) and they *washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.* (Rev. xiv.) They thus, quickened by his Spirit, served him in faith, hope, and love, and learned on earth the employment of heaven, to do the will of God. These servants are redeemed sinners and glorified saints. While servants, they are children also; they dwell with their master as children with a parent, and they ever behold his face beaming with love and joy unspeakable. Once they aimed to serve him, but it was more aim than attainment. Once they prayed, "*Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,*" and now that prayer is fully accomplished, and they themselves enjoy the very measures of their desires, and in heaven itself *delight to do the will of God.*

Observe further THE NATURE OF THEIR SERVICE.

But what mind can conceive the holy admiration with which they behold the glories of God, the joyful gratitude with which they celebrate his praises; the delightful exertions with which they fly to do his will?

But did they not serve God below? What is the difference between their serving him here, and their serving him there? As to our service here, we are soon weary in it. Our spirits flag, we require rest: but there the mind is ever lively and

awake, the body is ever active and alive, the service is unwearied. As to our service here, it is full of imperfection, our faith is weak, our hope is dull, our love is cold, our praises are feeble, all is disproportioned and imperfect; but in that blessed world, faith becomes sight—hope is there enjoyment, love burns with intense ardour, and praises from the heart ever ascend; all is proportioned and perfect. In this world our service soon ceases; nearly one third of our time is lost in sleep, and of how much of the rest do worldliness and sin continually rob God! If we enjoy communion with him in prayer or praise, the service is soon past and gone; but there, our service is perpetual, and the happy employment of doing God's will shall occupy us for ever.

Once more observe THE COMMUNION there enjoyed WITH OUR FELLOW SERVANTS. The glorified saints rejoice in each other's holiness and happiness, and thus the general happiness of the whole is infinitely extended and enlarged. There are many hindrances to full communion here. Real Christians know but few real Christians; and through the many interruptions of this world, they have seldom much opportunity of fully knowing each other. Our own corruptions, and the infirmities of all God's servants here, hinder full and entire union of heart; but there will be no allays of this kind there. No envy or

jealousy at each other's gifts and graces, happiness and glory, Just as the eye envies not the ear, and the hand envies not the foot; but all the members of the body are exalted in the happiness of each, so will it be there. The happiness of another will be mine in his possessing it; as the wife is exalted in the husband, and the child in the parent, so shall there be joy in the presence of the glorified servants of God, in every joy that every servant possesses. You shall be in that glorious company, where there is the full conviction that you love every individual there, and every individual loves you, and this purely, fervently, perfectly, and for ever,

But let us go still farther, and contemplate,

IV. THE BLESSED SIGHT OF GOD,

Or, as it is called, The beatific vision.

They shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads.

We have here the nature of this vision, and its efficacy.

1. THE NATURE OF THIS VISION—*they shall see his face.*

Have distinct, clear, and full views of God, as we have when we see another face to face. When Adam was innocent, he lived in the immediate presence of God, in the earthly paradise, the garden of Eden. He was, on his fall, expelled from

that happy garden, and lost the sight of God. The Gospel is a process for man's recovering more than Adam lost. In order to this recovery, God gives his people the grace of faith, *the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.* (Heb. xi. 1.) We walk by faith, and in the exercise of faith have communion with God, but it is with many interruptions, and with much obscurity.

God is indeed every where throughout his infinite universe; higher than the heavens, deeper than hell, wider than the East from the West, or the North from the South, incomprehensibly perfect, indivisibly immense and eternal.

But in what the Scriptures call the third heavens, he peculiarly manifests himself to his happy creatures. There are the first heavens the regions of the air; the second heavens, which is the starry firmament; and the third heavens, the special residence of God. O how glorious that heavenly Jerusalem which is above! "With allusion to the brightest things here below, it is said to have a wall of jaspar, buildings of gold, a foundation of precious stones, and gates of pearls; being clear as crystal, shining like unto glass, and transparent in brightness:" and if the gates be of pearl, and the streets be of gold, what are the inner rooms?

But the chief glory is this,—there God manifests

his immediate presence. To see God perfectly is often described as the special happiness of his people hereafter. *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* (Heb. xii. 14.) *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* (Matt. v. 8.) *Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face—we shall see him as he is.* This sight of God includes an intimate knowledge of which we can now have but little conception and a satisfying conviction of his love to us.

It was the privilege of many saints on earth to have such communion with God, that they have been said to see him *face to face.* Thus Jacob, when he wrestled with the angel: (Gen. xxxii. 30) Thus Moses when *the Lord spake to him face to face,* (Exod. xxxiii. 11.) and he tells the Israelites, *the Lord talked with you face to face,* (Deut. v. 4.) All these, however, were very limited views of God. When Moses would behold his glory, he was told, *Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me, and live;* and it was only in a cleft of the rock, that he was allowed, and that for a moment, to see some distant rays of his glory.

But now, in heaven, they behold that glory shining in its strength: not visibly with the eye, nor sensibly with the ear—for God is a Spirit; but by immediate manifestation of it, they behold him as *the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and*

truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty.

This glorious object of vision will engage every eye, eclipse every other light, and fill the whole circuit of the heavenly regions with its own brightness. Adored and magnified in his true glory as the *One* Lord, and loved with inexpressible love, he will be the joy and the portion of the heavenly inhabitants for ever.

THE TRANSFORMING EFFECT OF THIS SIGHT must also be observed.

And His name is on their foreheads.

That is, they become manifestly and obviously like the glorious God. The sight of God's glory, as discovered in the Gospel is assimilating and transforming. *We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* (2 Cor. iii. 18.) When Moses had been with God in the mount, his face shone, so that the Israelites could not behold him without a veil. But in heaven we may well suppose this effect is more immediate and complete. Then will *the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us.*

The name or character of God is even now visibly stamped on Christians. They *put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness;* but, through manifold

infirmities, it is often difficult to discern, either in ourselves or in others, this name or divine impress.

But in heaven the name of God will be distinct and legible. His servants will be pure *as he is pure, holy as he is holy*, and *merciful as he is merciful*. O what a blessed state of soul, when there is entire goodness and perfect love—not one jarring note of discord, not one imagination of evil!

Nay the gloried body even will attain some resemblance of the glorious God; for it will be immortal, incorruptible, powerful, and spiritual. *When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory. The righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of the Father.* And who can realize all the glory of that scene, when every body of every saint reflects the glory of its Divine Creator?

5. THE PERPETUAL GLORY ENJOYED. *They shall reign for ever and ever.*

Here notice, their glory, and its perpetuity.

THEIR GLORY—*They shall reign.*

The glory of heaven is often described as a kingdom, and Christians as kings reigning in that kingdom. Our Saviour says to his people, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;* and they for ever sing, *Unto him that loved us, and*

washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion.

Even in this life, Christians are called *a Royal Priesthood* as the sure expectants of a *crown of life*, (Rev. ii. 10.) *a crown of righteousness* (2 Tim. iv. 8.) and a *crown of glory* (1 Peter v. 4.) But here they are only heirs, training up for their future glorious elevation.

But why are they called kings? Because a kingdom is the highest pinnacle of human elevation, and therefore best serves to illustrate those incomparable heights of bliss and glory to which we shall be raised hereafter.

I say incomparable, because our heavenly bliss is infinitely beyond that of the most favoured earthly monarch. In all earthly kings, their royalty and power soon terminate; at the latest in death, and sometimes before; but, at best, their glory is unsolid and brittle. They often do not begin to reign till half a life is gone by. And then much of their time, though kings, must be spent as other men's lives are; they are subject to the same infirmities as other men; nor is even their dominion free from a bondage: to maintain dominion requires no little sacrifice and slavery.

Now take the contrary of all these defects: a royalty never lost, enduring through eternity, without the smallest restraint or sacrifice, and

something may be conceived of the glory of God's elect in his own kingdom.

And further, it has this peculiarity; it is a kingdom possessed by an infinity of kings of such a character, that the glory and happiness of each adds to the glory and happiness of all. The stars in the heavens are single points of light. But in the heaven of heavens, such is the union of these stars, that all is light—one great constellation of glory; *the brightness of the firmament for ever and ever.*

Which leads me to consider,

ITS PERPETUITY—it is *for ever and ever.*

It is not a leasehold estate for the most lengthened term imaginable. Kingdoms on earth have their periods, their rise and prosperity, their decline and fall. But this kingdom is ever rising and prospering, and will never fall nor decline. Were eternity wanting, it would give a cast of darkness and gloom over the fairest scene of heaven's meridian glory.

Abraham told the rich man, *they that would pass from us to you cannot:* not that they for a moment could admit the thought of leaving; but supposing an impossible case—if they would, they cannot.

The Scriptures always describe it under the character of perpetuity. It is everlasting life, eternal glory, eternal salvation, an eternal inhe-

ritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Christ, everlasting habitations, a continuing city, a house eternal in the heavens, and pleasures at God's right hand for evermore. In a similar view, St. John describes the blessed as *a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.* (Rev. iii. 12.) Their blessedness is therefore secure for eternity.

And in this eternity, as we cannot cease to admire, and love, and delight in that infinite object of glory, so we cannot cease to be happy. The eternal God, that boundless and unfathomable ocean of love and all perfection, the saints shall for ever praise; praise Him for what He is in Himself, and praise Him for what He has done and is doing for them and for all others: and as the rays of Divine love and glory shine upon them, they are reflected back again in ceaseless joyful hallelujahs.

How interrupted is all human happiness below! If we enjoy communion with God, how soon we lose the sense of his presence! If the light of his countenance shine upon us, it is but for a moment. How different will it be there! O the glories of those words, *for ever with the Lord!* Well may we comfort each other with those words. Then again here, often the Christian may be cast down with the fear of perishing at the last; "What if

I should fall short at last of heaven!" If the thought should rise within, it cannot but agitate his mind. But in heaven there is no ground for such an anxiety, no possibility of such a loss: he is there, he is confirmed there for ever. After millions and millions of ages, the happiness will be as far from diminishing, and as far from ending, as when it commenced.

But language utterly fails, imagination fails; *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* (1 Cor. ii.) The *eye* of man has seen many splendid sights, goodly prospects, rich and extended views, magnificent palaces adorned with all that art can contrive, and splendid cities full of splendid edifices: the *ear* has heard awakening and soul-thrilling eloquence, ravishing music, touching and exquisite melodies, and tender and melting expressions of sympathy and kindness: the *heart* has conceived worlds upon worlds, it can multiply, it can enlarge, it can beautify, to the utmost stretch of fancy's limits:—and yet the glory of heaven is beyond all that ever human eye saw, or human ear heard, or human heart ever can now conceive, excepting in that foretaste and earnest which the Divine Spirit now gives.

So the Scriptures invariably speak of it. The Saviour dwelt in that glory; but he describes it

not. He calls heaven simply *my Father's house.* (John xiv.) The apostle Paul was carried up to it, and what says he of it? *He heard unspeakable words, which it is not possible for a man to utter.* (2 Cor. xii. 4.) St. John beheld it in his enraptured visions, and how does he develop it? *It doth not yet appear what we shall be.* (1 John iii. 2.)

I address two classes—Those neglecting this glory, and those seeking it.

1. THOSE NEGLECTING THIS GLORY. How inexpressible, how mournful your folly! Look at the conduct of men wise for this world. Where it is a mere temporal advantage, some employment, some better situation, how vigilant and circumspect, how active and how patient also will they be! Ah! men even run with more violence to death and hell, than Christians to life and glory. But surely to neglect this great salvation is that which is emphatically folly, even madness worse than chained lunacy. Think you that any who reach heaven regret any losses or any sacrifices for reaching that glory. No, they cry—"O sweet losses! O blessed sacrifices! which God in love called me to! by these he made me meet for this glory." Do any say, "I too wish to see this glory." There are two grand impediments, your guilt and your unfitness. But the Gospel shows you how both may be removed. Believe in the Lord Jesus, and so shall all your guilt be forgiven,

according to the promise, *Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more;* thus shall you be among those, *having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.* (Heb. x. 17—19.) Ask also for the gift of the Holy Spirit, by whom your unfitness will also be removed, your heart truly converted, and you made *meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.*

CHRISTIANS SEEKING THIS GLORY. O my brethren, why do we spend so few thoughts upon it? Is there this exceeding and eternal weight of glory before us? O let us often and deeply meditate upon it. If ever you want a subject for contemplation, here you have one of the richest and fullest of animating hope. The bridegroom longs to be united to his bride; the heir longs to be of age to receive his inheritance; the merchant longs for the return of his richly-freighted vessel. O let us long to enter that city of the great King, of which such glorious things are spoken—and seeing it is our chief good, our last home, our everlasting felicity, let our affections be set upon it, our conversation be there already, and we, as strangers and pilgrims, pressing on, till through the gates we enter in, to dwell there for ever.

SERMON XV.

THE CHRISTIAN'S TRIUMPH.

1 CORINTHIANS XV. 57, 58.

Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

HAVING explained those all important subjects which have successively been brought before you in preceding discourses, I purpose now to consider the Christian's victory through the Lord Jesus Christ, and the duty of Christian stedfastness arising from that victory.

My object is to bring forward those great principles which, under Divine grace, tend to perseverance and fruitfulness in every good work. You

have been hearing for several sabbaths the most solemn subjects discussed, and I hope, not without some impressions of their importance; but lest those impressions should be merely transient and unprofitable, I would once more labour to establish and confirm your minds in the purpose of steady adherence to the Gospel of Christ, and an abounding fruitfulness in his service. May our God prosper the effort for these ends. We will consider—

1. THE VICTORY GIVEN TO THE BELIEVER,

2. THE PRACTICAL INFLUENCE WHICH IT SHOULD HAVE,

3. THE CERTAIN RECOMPENSE OF ALL OUR LABOURS.

1. THE VICTORY GIVEN TO THE BELIEVER.

Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We lately considered the subjects of the everlasting happiness of God's people. Between us and that happiness there are many intervening obstacles; many difficulties to be surmounted, many enemies to be encountered, many conflicts to be maintained with them, and final victory to be gained over them.

In considering the victory given to the believer, let us notice, 1. our enemies; 2. the conquest over

them; 3. for whom the conquest is made; and, 4. to whom it is to be ascribed.

1. OUR ENEMIES.

The Apostle had been speaking in all the glow of a fervent spirit of the triumphant resurrection of the righteous, and the accomplishment thereby of *the saying, Death is swallowed up in victory.* In an animated figure he personifies and addresses death and the grave,—*O Death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?* and states, *The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law;* and then in the words of our text pours out his warm thanksgivings for the victory.

We may notice here four enemies, The Law, Sin, Death, and the Grave.

THE LAW IS OUR ENEMY.

But is not the Law holy, just, and good? O yes, unspeakably good; and every Christian says, *Lord, how I love thy law, it is my delight all the day.* It is perfectly reasonable and perfectly excellent; and to be conformed to it, will be our happiness for ever. The Law, but for sin, would not have been our enemy but our best friend. Here is one part of the unhappiness of the fall, by which that holy Law designed to be the source of happiness, is become our adversary. We are all transgressors of the Law; condemnation by it is the sad and wretched consequence of transgression. The curse of its violation is upon us, and its purity

therefore instead of being our delight, is our terror and our hatred. O fearful state in which the excellences of God's perfect Law become only so many grounds of our condemnation!

SIN IS OUR ENEMY—In fact the one enemy, the chief enemy, for all might be included in this, and all others are enemies only because we have yielded to sin. *Sin is the transgression of the law.* It is doing what God has forbidden, and omitting to do what he has required; and could we see it as it is, we should see it to be compounded of ignorance, pride, rebellion, infatuation, and madness; by sin the subject opposes himself to the King; the son to the Father, and the creature to the Creator. Sin is man's contradiction to the will, nay his defiance of the authority of his Maker. Sin is the introducer of all sorrow and pain, sickness, disease, and death, and is the very sting of all these. It makes the holy God justly displeased with us. It arrays his truth and justice against us, and all his perfect attributes are insulted by it. Yet we have all bowed down before, and served sin; admitted him into our very bosoms, and he has us by nature so completely in his grasp that we are his slaves, (John viii. 34,) and his sons, *the children of disobedience.* (Eph. ii. 2.)

DEATH IS OUR ENEMY. This is the enemy which follows in the path of sin, and we fall under his

power as we have sinned,—first, sin, then death. *The soul that sinneth it shall die;* and all having sinned, the whole human race yields to this irresistible enemy. Wherever sin prepares the way for him, he comes on with steady, determined, unwavering, and unerring step, till with one terrible stroke, he removes and brings the criminal into the immediate presence of the Judge eternal. Who has not dreaded this enemy, and who shall not grapple with him? and who that is truly wise will not consider the means of victory over him?

THE GRAVE IS OUR ENEMY. It completes the work of the destruction of the body which death began. It dissolves the mortal fabric and mingles human flesh with the dust from which it was formed; *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.* It brings those bodies, of which we took such care, lest a breath of air should injure them, or the least hurt befal them, into an alliance, the most close and intimate, with all that is base and humiliating! *I have said to corruption, Thou art my father, and to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister.* What an enemy is this! what a subjugation is here?

Christians, as well as worldly men, have to do with these enemies. The grave is *the house appointed for all living.* Christians, like others, must die; *it is appointed to men once to die.* Christians have sin dwelling in them, and Christians are

transgressors of God's holy law, and as transgressors justly exposed to its penalty.

How important then is it for us all to know the way of conquering these enemies! Let us then consider,

2. THE CONQUEST OVER THESE ENEMIES.

God *giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The Jews expected a conquering Messiah: but they looked with the eye of the carnal mind—and hoped for one who would subdue the Romans, deliver them from earthly foes, and raise them to the highest degree of worldly greatness, exalting them to be the chief among the nations. O how poor such a victory! How little such triumphs! How wretched might their nation have been, had their vain expectations of earthly greatness been fulfilled; while Pharisaic pride and self-righteousness, and Sadducean infidelity and sensuality were left unconquered, and thus they were still in bondage under their worst and most serious enemies! Our Saviour told them of a better deliverance: *If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

Jesus Christ is a conquering Saviour, but he has contended not with man's imaginary, but with his real enemies. He has blotted *out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it*

to his cross: and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. (Col. ii. 14, 15.)

As to the law of God—he suffered to the very uttermost all its righteous penalties, enduring its extreme curse in our place. For this end *he was made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law;* and this work he fully accomplished: *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.* (Gal. iii. 13.) But he had not only to recover us from under the law as an enemy, but to make that law our friend, our justifier, our title to life eternal; and this he also accomplished. *Think not,* he says, *I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For, verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.* (Matt. v. 17, 18.) He wrought out a perfect righteousness by an exact conformity of life to every requirement of the Divine law; and this righteousness is available before God for, and imputed to, every believer. *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth.*

As to sin, he extracted that deadly sting with which this our chief enemy wounds and destroys. God *hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God*

in him; he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. He *himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree,* and *his blood cleanseth from all sin.* And not only has he removed the guilt of sin, but he has broken its power, and made it hateful to the believer, who now, by the grace of Christ, delights *in the law of God after the inner man,* and, by the power of the Spirit, is enabled to mortify sin, and grow in grace and holiness.

As TO DEATH also, the Christian's conquest is and shall be complete. Jesus our Redeemer came to *deliver those who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.* It was his gracious determination, *I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues.* (Hosea xiii. 14.) Hence, he has changed the very character of death. It is now to fall *asleep in Jesus,* (Acts vii. 60); *to die is gain.* (Phil. i. 21.) It is numbered among our privileges. (1 Cor. iii. 22.) And so far from being a terror to the believer, in his best state of mind, he says, *I desire to depart, and to be with Christ.* It unveils to him the very sum and substance of all his hopes. How shall I describe it? My brethren, it is the friendly hand that draws aside the veil which hides from us the Saviour. Death discovers to us Immanuel in his beauty, and leads us where we shall be with him for ever; and, when he has executed his office for all the elect of God, death shall him-

self be cast into the lake of fire, and destroyed for ever. Jesus dying and entering in his own person the regions of the dead, *through death has destroyed him that hath the power of death, that is the devil,* and has lighted up all the gloomy vale; he also goes with his people when they pass through the valley, so that they need *fear no evil.*

As to THE GRAVE, true it is *the house appointed for all living,* but the Saviour penetrated its recesses. His own body lay in the silent tomb, that the grave itself might be sanctified to every one of his followers. He undertook our cause against this enemy. *I will ransom them from the power of the grave—O grave, I will be thy destruction.* (Hosea xiii. 14.) And now what is the grave but the seed-plot or nursery which prepares the body sown in it for a beautiful and glorious resurrection. True, it may seem buried, and for a season lost; but it shall *revive as the corn,* and come forth no longer a vile but a glorious body, to flourish for ever in the courts of our God.

O blessed Jesus, what tongue can tell our obligations to thee! How wonderful thy love! all thy people's enemies are subdued by thee, and what shall separate us from thy love! In all our troubles *we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.* And the Apostle who says this, adds the blessed assurance—*I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities,*

nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

3. FOR WHOM THE CONQUEST IS MADE. It is made for true believers in Christ Jesus. The Apostle had been dwelling on the resurrection of the righteous. He is speaking simply of those who are united to Christ by a living faith, and one with him. The unconverted partake not of this victory; they remain under the power of their spiritual enemies. Our victories over the varied temptations of this world are obtained by faith in Jesus. *Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.* It is by the same faith we gain one great victory over that everlasting destruction which we had merited by our sins. *Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.* And so in all other spiritual conquests it is only the believer who can truly adopt the words of our text, or that triumphant expression, *We are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

It is of faith, that it might be by grace. Faith is from the operation of the Divine Spirit in the heart of man. (Ephes. i. 19.) Faith cordially credits the divine testimony concerning the Saviour, and receives him as revealed in the

word, and wholly relies upon him. This faith is *the faith of God's elect.* (Titus i. 1.) Whom God *hath from the beginning chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.* (2 Thess. ii. 13.)

Faith gratefully welcomes the rich blessings, which Jesus has procured for us. Pure water from the fountain is not more refreshing to the thirsty man, than are the conquests of Jesus over spiritual enemies to the soul wearied and burdened by sin. There is a finished and complete salvation in the Lord Jesus for the worst of sinners; there is a full victory over man's mightiest enemies. Faith says, 'I believe the Divine declaration. I know my God would not, could not deceive me. I venture therefore my everlasting interest, my all through eternity, on Jesus. I cast my sinful soul on Him, on Him alone for complete salvation.'

Oh unbelievers, the enemies we have mentioned are yet to you in their full strength. The Law condemns you; sin is proved upon you; the sting of death has all its sharpness: the grave is to you like the prison door, through which you will be led to a shameful and finally ruinous execution. Ah! I fear lest, after all that has been declared among you, that to some within these walls death and the grave are still unvanquished enemies, and retain their dominion. The penalty

of the Law is over you, sin in all its fascinating fatal power enchains you. You have not fled to Jesus, and where else can the sinner find one ray of true hope! O that I could prevail with you, now at length to sue for pardon! Once again I make known to you that there is a proclamation of grace and mercy to sinners; there is a full and free pardon for the wicked forsaking his way. I come in the Divine Saviour's name; by his authority I am commissioned to address you. By virtue of the office entrusted to me I once more declare in your ears the fulness of redeeming love—the completeness of the salvation in Jesus—the free forgiveness through him of all sin—and the promised gift of the Holy Spirit to all that ask in his name. I earnestly, I affectionately call you to come to Christ. *As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.* Not one of you within the sound of my voice will be able in the great day of judgment to say that the rich grace of the Gospel was not set before you, that an invitation was not made to you, that a gracious declaration of salvation by grace through faith was never proclaimed in your ears. O hear, and your soul shall live.

Believers in Christ, for you the conquest has been made. My office is to comfort you. *Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God;*

speak ye comfortably unto Jerusalem; cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned. (Isaiah xl. 1, 2.) If the prophets had so to address the Jews, how much more may we speak to you in similar language! Look at the triumphs of your Saviour. All enemies shall be put under his feet. However broken and burdened you may be, though weak as a bruised reed, however small the spark of divine grace, even as the smoking flax, rely on the faithful promise, *a bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory; and in his name shall the Gentiles trust.* (Matt. xii. 20, 21.) We hope that many here can with truth and feeling say, *Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory.*

4. THE PRAISE TO BE GIVEN FOR THIS VICTORY. *Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory.*

If we attain the victory, it was not our choice, but God's grace, that made us to differ from others. It was not our native good disposition, it was not our native free will, it was not our better discernment and superior excellence that led us to seek and receive these blessings. Oh! we should have forfeited them over and over again, if left to ourselves. We should have spurned them from us as of no value, or only an insult to our pride and self-sufficiency. *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but by his mercy*

he saved us. It is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

I know that the experience of the Christian coincides with what I say when I thus speak. I may appeal, beloved brethren in Christ, to your own consciences, that you have a feeling corresponding to that which I express, when I say, that it was not our good will, our goodness, our natural choice, that led us to embrace the overtures of mercy; rather we disliked the free grace as offensive to our pride, we hated the purity of the gospel as contrary to our lusts, and nothing but our absolute necessity, as discovered to us by the teaching of the Spirit, led us to come, if we have come, as poor helpless sinners, for free and complete salvation. We then can say with the apostle, *Thanks be to God. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.*

And surely, my brethren, the Christian life is one of constant thanksgiving. Oh! when we contemplate our totally ruined state; when we see what we have justly merited by our multiplied acts of rebellion; when, even after we have known the way *of righteousness,* (2 Pet. ii. 20,) we cannot but be deeply sensible how often we have walked unworthy of our high vocation; how ungrateful we have been, how forgetful of God; how often we have backslidden from him; how

cold are our affections, and how dull our services at the best; that while God is daily loading us with benefits, we have a rebellious and revolting heart, and he pities us, and spares, and pardons, and receives us again into the embraces of his love, and lifts up the light of his countenance upon us; surely our hearts must be touched with all this love. We cannot but feel the force of the passage, *I will establish my covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord, That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done.* (Ezek. xvi. 62, 63.) What but infinite and everlasting love could bear with such sinners as we are. And then when we view the wonderful deliverance provided for us, that it is all of sovereign grace—that it is effected in that all-wondrous and surprising way of God's not sparing his own Son, but sending him to be born, to grow up, to live and to die for us—when we consider yet further what the blessings are which he has procured for us: the returning favour of God, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and not only deliverance from, and victory over sin and death, the grave and hell, but blessings far above calculation or expression in the sight, and glory, and enjoyment of God, in bliss unutterable throughout eternity; O once believe this and the

fire will kindle within, and your hearts will burn with grateful emotion, and you will burst forth in the expressions of Paul, *Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ;* (1 Cor. xv. 57.) or in those of David, *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.* (Ps. ciii. 1.)

O my brethren, I long to see you all partakers of the enjoyment of these happy and grateful feelings; in every thing giving thanks; and constrained by gratitude and love to live to him who poureth his benefits so richly around you. May the Divine Spirit raise every one of you to this blessed state of mind!

SERMON XVI.

CHRISTIAN STEDFASTNESS.

1 CORINTHIANS XV. 57, 58.

Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

WE proposed to consider, 1. The victory given to the believer; 2. The practical influence which it should have; and 3. The certain recompense of all our labour.

In considering the victory given to the believer, I pointed out,—1. Our enemies; 2. The conquest over them; 3. For whom the conquest is made; and 4. To whom the praise is to be given.

The victory of Christ is the grand motive to

Christian stedfastness. The word *therefore*, in our text, shews that there is a close connexion between the victory and the practical influence. What is the effect so great a victory should have upon us; what should be the influence of such amazing love? *therefore be ye stedfast.* The word *therefore* connects this passage with the whole preceding chapter. It is like a burning-glass, which collects the sun's rays into a narrow compass, and thus increases their intensity and vigour. The Apostle had in the preceding part of the chapter insisted upon, and illustrated the resurrection of believers. He had stated how the whole face of nature shewed the possibility of our resurrection; he had declared the connection between the resurrection of Christ, and that of his people; he had shewn how the martyrdom of Christians confirmed the same doctrine. By the figure of one star differing from another star in glory, he had further explained its glorious character. He had beautifully contrasted our fallen body with that spiritual and incorruptible body that should be raised from the grave. He had lastly pointed out the victory which Christ had obtained for us over all our enemies. And he now brings all the force of these various considerations to bear on this one point: Seeing that there is such a resurrection—that there is such a glory before you—that it is so confirmed—that

there are such triumphs to be shared: *be stedfast, unmoveable, and always abound in the work of the Lord.*

And to the force of persuasive eloquence, he joins all the tenderness of love, when he says, *my beloved brethren.* It is not a common expression. St. Paul to the Philippians uses similar words; generally it is, *brethren, my brethren,* but here carried away by the magnitude of the subjects which he had been considering, and urged on by the strength of his affection for the Corinthians, he uses the most tender terms to constrain them, by love, to Christian stedfastness.

It is by this motive also that I do especially desire to influence you to this important duty. By all the affection that has subsisted between us as minister and people, by all those endearing seasons which we have had in assembling ourselves together for public worship; by our communion meetings before the Lord's Supper; and our communion together with our common Saviour at that holy table: I exhort you, be *stedfast, unmoveable, and always abound in the work of the Lord.* Sure I am, that in seeking to quicken you to this, I aim at your highest happiness. Sure I am, that when we meet, as I trust many of us shall meet, in a happier world, you will not then think I over-estimated the importance of the duty

to which I now call you. But let us proceed to consider,

II. THE PRACTICAL INFLUENCE which the victory, given to believers, should have upon them.

Be ye stedfast, and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Here are three things; stedfastness, unmoveableness, and abounding labours.

1. STEDFASTNESS.

This seems more immediately to refer to personal constancy, in maintaining our Christian profession against assaults from our corrupt nature within, as *unmoveable* does to assaults from without. O my brethren, when I look at the many attacks to which you are exposed, in an ensnaring world, from a subtle adversary and from a corrupt heart, if I have any desire for your best interest, I cannot but press the exhortation, *Be ye stedfast.*

Be stedfast in maintaining the doctrines of the Gospel. The doctrines which I have preached, have exhibited the sovereignty and equity of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in all his dealings; his infinite tenderness, his unspotted purity and holiness, and his boundless love; they have shown you our total ruin by nature and through sin; the divine counsel planning salvation before time began, and in the fulness of time accom-

plishing the redemption of a lost world by Christ Jesus; the election of God's chosen people in Christ unto holiness, before the foundation of the world; their regeneration by his Spirit, and their free justification through his blood, adoption into the family of God, sanctification by the Spirit, manifested in the life of faith, hope, and love; preservation to the end, by the power of God through faith; resurrection from the dead, the future judgment, the condemnation of the wicked to hell, and the admission of the righteous to heaven. The doctrines have been those for which the martyrs were burned at the stake, which our reformers sealed with their blood and have embodied in the Articles, Liturgy, and Homilies of our Church. Now I exhort you to a stedfast adherence to these doctrines. As the Apostle exhorts the Colossians, so would I exhort you: *Continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope which ye have heard; . . . , but as ye have received Christ Jesus, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith.* (Col. i. 23; ii. 6, 7.) As the first Christians *continued stedfastly in the apostle's doctrine,* (Acts ii. 42,) so do you continue stedfast in the same doctrine. It is my hearty desire and prayer that none of you may fall away from the love of the truth; it is my fervent wish for you, that you may hold fast the profession

of faith without wavering. O, it is affecting to see those, who once did run well, hindered by some worldly lust, declining and drawing back even to perdition. *Thou standest*, O Christian, *by faith. Be not highminded, but fear.*

BE STEDFAST IN CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP. The first Christians continued stedfast, not only in the Apostle's doctrine, but also in the Apostle's *fellowship and breaking of bread and prayers.* I believe many of you have known this holy and happy communion, and I can address you as *fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.* (Ephes. ii. 19.) O continue in that holy fellowship. I believe that a truly Christian fellowship has existed among us; a fellowship which has been greatly promoted by our religious societies, our schools, and missionary and district visiting society meetings, and more especially by our monthly communion meetings. Let these meetings be increased, rather than diminished; but especially let the love of all, one towards each other, increase and abound more and more.[1]

[1] The beautiful prayer in the Communion Service is peculiarly adapted to the occasion when it is offered; and is so suited to this part of the subject, that I cannot but quote it.

"Almighty and everliving God, we most heartily thank thee for that thou dost vouchsafe to feed us, who have duly received these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food

Be stedfast too in a CHRISTIAN CONVERSATION. I beseech you, decline not from the holy practice of the gospel of Christ. We so soon slip into habits of worldliness, or self-indulgence, or display! But *as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;* and *walk worthy of your high vocation.* Often refresh your minds with a view of the triumphs and victories of Christ, and the glory to which he will exalt you, not to kindle an unholy pride, but to animate your endeavours after a conversation *becoming the Gospel of Christ.* The Christian is eminently seen in his holy, meek, and loving, and humble tempers, in the laborious and diligent discharge of his varied duties, and in his patient continuance

of the most precious body and blood of thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, and dost assure us thereby of thy favour and goodness towards us, and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people; and are also heirs, through hope, of thy everlasting kingdom, by the merits of the most precious death and passion of thy dear Son. And we most humbly beseech thee, O heavenly Father, so to assist us with thy grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works, as thou hast prepared for us to walk in; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen."

in well-doing. He joins together apparently opposite things, speed and patience, fulfilling the direction, *let us run with patience the race that is set before us:* and diligence in his worldly business, with devotedness to God, *not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.*

2. UNMOVEABLENESS.

This refers to the various outward assaults with which the Christian's graces will be tried. Many temptations will befal him. You must, as Christians, go through trouble, and trouble on account of your religion. *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.* You will be assailed by threatenings and hard words, and cruel mockings, perhaps from those you love most strongly; you will be allured, on the other hand, more powerfully by smiles and kindness. Let not faith fail. Faith can easily begin and go a little way, but when we meet with trials and persecutions for *the word's sake, bye and bye, we are offended.* Peter's faith enabled him to go on the sea, but it did not stand the buffetting of the winds and the swelling of the waves: he would have sunk but for the helping hand of his Saviour.

I would guard you against novelties in religion —shun them as a great snare. *Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein;*

and ye shall find rest for your souls. When I notice the reply to this, *they said, We will not walk therein,* and look at the peculiar character of the present day, I feel it my duty here especially to warn you. There will always be novelties in religion; but remember the apostolic direction, *Be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.* All the great truths of religion are old and known. They are contained in the confessions of every Protestant church, and they are attested by the blood of martyrs. It has been my aim to preach them in season and out of season; the substance is salvation by the grace of Christ through faith unto holiness, and I would adopt the apostle's words, as far as I have preached the gospel of Christ: *Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other Gospel unto you, than that ye have received, let him be accursed.* For if he who spreads poison under the name of healing medicine, and destroys the bodies of men without number, be an abomination, how much more he who poisons the soul with falsehood. *Take heed* then *that no man deceive* you, as our Lord has told you, adding, *for many shall come in my name, say-*

ing, I am Christ, and shall deceive many. (Matt. xxiv. 4, 5.) Try every thing by the word of God, let your mind yield wholly to the sacred record, only pray much that the Spirit may *guide you into all truth*, and that you be not deceived by the subtilty of Satan, who *is transformed into an angel of light*, and whose *ministers also* are *transformed into the ministers of righteousness.* (2 Cor. xi. 14, 15.)

3. ABOUNDING LABOURS.

Always abounding in the work of the Lord.

The Apostle does not mean that any good works are more than we ought to do; the Bible knows nothing of works of supererogation; but he means a holy diligence, and an abundant fruitfulness in every good word and work.

Now notice the work of the Lord, and the abounding in that work.

The WORK OF THE LORD is whatever our Saviour Christ calls us to. The first part of it is to attend to our everlasting interests. *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.* (Matt. vii. 33.) *Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for the meat that endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you.* (John vi. 17.) The interests of your own soul are your first interests. And here forget what is behind, and reach forth to what is before, and *press* with all eagerness *toward the mark for the prize of the high calling*

of God in Christ Jesus. (Phil. iii. 16.) In this work faith is a leading part. *This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* (John vi. 29.) Then follows love. *Faith worketh by love.* The work of the Lord must all spring from, and be animated by love. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength,* and *thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* (Luke x. 27. These principles will lead you faithfully to fulfil your duties towards your fellow-creatures; and, acting on these principles, there is not one duty, however humble, in which you are not doing the work of the Lord. When the Apostle speaks of servants obeying their masters, he says, *Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ.* (Col. iii. 23, 24.) O Christians! what a glory this sheds around all your daily labours; Christ regards all as serving him. *To visit the fatherless and widow in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world,* (James i. 27.) is another part of this work. Labouring also for advancing the kingdom of Christ, and all efforts to diffuse his gospel, come under this character. St. Paul tells Timothy in the next chapter, *Timothy worketh the work of the Lord as I also do.* (1 Cor. xvi. 10.) So again attention to means

of grace; O I beseech you, neglect not prayer and reading the Scriptures, self-examination, and observing the sabbath-day. Such is the work to which our God calls us; he is your rightful Lord and Master, yield then a cheerful and glad obedience to Him, it is your highest wisdom, honour, and happiness.

But what is THE ABOUNDING IN THIS WORK?

The Scriptures dwell much on this. St. Paul not only here, but often elsewhere presses it. He tells the Thessalonians, *We beseech you, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us, how ye ought to walk, and to please God, so ye would abound more and more:* and he prays for them, *the Lord make you to increase and abound in love toward one another, and toward all men.* (1 Thess. iii. 12. iv. 1.) St. Paul enters into more particulars, *Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly-kindness, and to brotherly-kindness charity; for if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* (2 Peter i. 5—8.) Brethren, a Christian's life is no idle life; he is full of plans and efforts to do good. He should not need to be stirred up, but himself should stir up others. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good*

works and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Matt. v. 16.) The expression *always* should not pass unnoticed,—always abounding. At all seasons, in youth, middle life, and old age, in health and sickness, in poverty and riches, in trouble and prosperity; each season has its appropriate work in which the Christian should abound to the glory of his heavenly master. The Christian will always have work enough to do, and need never find time hang heavy upon him, but rather will hardly find the day long enough for his work. Brethren, I call you always to be zealously affected in a good thing; never yield to a slumbering, drowsy, negligent way of getting through your work, but gird up your minds to a steady, diligent, hearty fulfilment of all your Christian duties.

And, do you ask how all these are to be discharged? I tell you frankly, you have no strength of your own; you have no sufficiency in yourselves; but you have sufficient grace in the Lord Jesus, and *can do all things through Christ strengthening you.* (Phil. iv. 13.) Then shall you be *stedfast and unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord,* when you are *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* Only seek help of God; when the Apostles were threatened by the Jewish council, and forbid to speak in the name of Jesus, I am struck with their conduct,

they do not even ask for safety and protection, their prayer is, *Now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word.* (Acts iv. 29.) Here is the true source of the Christian's strength, to do and to suffer the will of God. Wait only on the Lord.

Do you want motives? consider,

III. THE CERTAIN RECOMPENSE OF ALL OUR LABOURS.

Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

It is the grand and animating spring of all exertion, that there should be an adequate return for our labour. But how often in worldly things are men's hopes disappointed! the tradesman lays out his capital, and time, and talents; and then his hopes, after all, of earthly remuneration may be disappointed. But in the service of Christ, *your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.*

Nor does this recompense in any way interfere with salvation and grace. It is not on the ground of merit in man, but mercy in God. The more we do for God, the more we owe to God, and therefore for all our works we are rather debtors than deservers. But O how wonderful is that grace which first disposes and enables us to work, and then rewards us for working!

It was to the *recompense of the reward* that Moses *had respect* when he esteemed *the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.* (Heb. ii. 26.) This supported the Apostles in all their afflictions, and comforted the martyrs in the flames.

What is the return then that Christians receive for their stedfast labours? There is a present recompense, and a future recompense.

A PRESENT RECOMPENSE. No act of love to Christ goes without even a present recompense. David says, speaking of God's commands, *in keeping them there is great reward.* (Psalm xix. 11.) There is an inward peace of mind and satisfaction that is its own reward, and not unfrequently temporal blessings follow a Christian life; the specific object of our labours is realized, and we see with our own eyes the blessed effects of devotedness to Christ; for *godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.* Yet we admit that, in God's sovereignty, it is sometimes otherwise. The Apostles went through such temporal afflictions that they said, *If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable.* But even in this case such rich spiritual blessings are given, patience and resignation, faith, hope, love, and humility grow and increase so much, as to make the Christian say, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted: as*

sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as having nothing and yet possessing all things. O the sweet sense of pardon and peace, the near access to God, and the communion with him in suffering times have been such as to make many a suffering Christian bless God for the cross, as his greatest mercy.

And then *our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.* (2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.) For consider,

THE FUTURE RECOMPENSE.

The expression is here, as is very usual with the sacred writers, of a general kind. The Apostle tells the Hebrews in a similar manner, *God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love which ye have shewn towards his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.* So our Lord says, *Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.* The expressions of a recompense are quite general. They do not enter into any minute description of the crowns of life and glory which they wear, or the bliss they shall enjoy. If you ask what this future recompense is, I reply, *it doth not yet appear what we shall be.* To me, my brethren, these expressions convey infinitely richer ideas of the heavenly reward,

than if every word of bliss and glory that human language can invent or multiply, had been employed to describe it. It is a glorious happiness of perfect knowledge, purity, and joy. It is to be like God, and to be ever with him; and the Bible tells you no more about it, because it is inconceivably great and glorious.

O glorious recompense, everlasting, incorruptible, and undefiled; may you, my brethren, attain it! O that I may but be helpful in bringing any of you to desire and to seek it! It is not a vain thing, it is your life.

Nor need the real Christian have a doubt here; the Apostle says, *forasmuch as ye know:* so in another place he says, *We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* (2 Cor. v. 1.) Christians may have, and should have, a present assurance of hope of their future recompense. They have the earnest of their heavenly inheritance in the gifts of the Spirit here below, by that Spirit they are sealed unto the day of redemption, and soon, very soon, they shall have the full sight and enjoyment of the promised reward.

All this *is in the Lord,* as every promise is *yea and amen in Christ Jesus.* It is for his sake, through his mediation, and to his glory; and well may an assurance founded on Christ, be solid.

Whoso believeth in him, shall never be confounded. If the assurance rest ultimately on anything short of the Lord Jesus, it is not built on the true foundation.

I have now, my brethren, for several Sundays been pleading with you on the most important of all events. Your increasing interest and attention fill me with hope that my labours may have been profitable to you. O that in the last great day it may be found that one and another may have been impressed, and convinced, and converted, truly converted to God: and that when the Lord shall then number his people, it may be said of our Zion, *this and that man was born in her.* (Psalm lxxxvii. 5.)

We shall not see much more of each other in this world. This voice will but seldom again reach your ears. O unconverted sinner, going on in thy worldly course, with my last breath would I entreat thee to pause and return to the Lord. O my beloved brethren in the Lord, my joy and crown, with my last breath I would beseech *you,* be *steadfast, unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord.*

SERMON XVII.

FIRST FAREWELL SERMON.

2 CORINTHIANS XIII. 11.

Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

INTERESTING and endearing has been our connexion as minister and people; now for about fourteen years I have ministered here, and this has hitherto been the only cure of souls that I have had since God called me to the ministry. You have borne with my many infirmities, and my frequent absences; you have gathered around me, and strengthened my hands in every good work, and many a grateful recollection, the review of our past intercourse revives. To sever these

ties is one of the sorest trials which I feel in my present situation and prospects.

To sever them—no—I feel that they never can be severed! The past will still afford sweet reflections in this world. I do trust also, it will have been found to be, to many of you, profitable not only for time, but both for time and eternity. Ties have been here cemented between us, which will last for ever. Time is short, eternity is at hand, and all earthly separations are but for a moment.

I cannot however but entertain the hope that such a season as the present may be improved to your spiritual advantage, and in this hope I would bend my whole aim to further your highest good, and for this purpose I have chosen the valedictory address of the apostle to the church at Corinth. Let us consider,

1. THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH IT WAS MADE,
2. THE PRACTICAL DIRECTIONS IT CONTAINS,
3. THE PARTING GOOD WISH IT EXPRESSED,
4. THE PROMISE WITH WHICH IT CONCLUDES.

I. THE CIRCUMSTANCES in which this parting address was made.

Corinth was a great and rich city, the capital of Achaia, with an extended commerce. It was one of the most considerable cities of Greece, and given up to idolatry and vain pleasures. The

apostle had received one of the most encouraging assurances from the Lord, *I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city.* (Acts xviii. 10.) And thus encouraged he laboured there about two years; a flourishing church of Christ was formed; which came behind no church in spiritual gifts, being *enriched by Him in all utterance and in all knowledge.* (1 Cor. i. 5.)

But after the apostle's departure, false teachers crept in; heresies and divisions spread amongst them; some fell into sin; one into grievous iniquity: the Lord's supper was grossly profaned, and there was danger lest this lately flourishing church should speedily decline and become corrupt. The apostle writes two divinely-inspired epistles, full of heavenly wisdom and holy affections, to recover them, and to be a standing instruction for the whole church of God in after ages; he closes his second epistle with the parting address which we have now to consider.

Though many of your circumstances are different, yet there are points of similarity of which I would avail myself. I will first present to your attention the circumstances of Christian congregations in great cities, and then the circumstances of the times in which we live.

1. THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF CONGREGATIONS IN GREAT CITIES are such as to be attended with

many snares to the soul. There is the wear and tear of constant bustling, distracting and multiplied occupations, with the little time that can be gained for the all-important duty of calm, retired, and close communion with God and our own hearts.

The general mass of the population of such a city as this is wholly immersed in the world and the things of the world; *the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life* (1 John ii. 16.) are those things which mainly occupy the thoughts and cares of its inhabitants. O it is fearful to look at the congregated amount of a million and a half of men here assembled within a few miles of each other, and to be satisfied, on palpable evidence, that a great, if not the greater part, neglect public worship, and thus live as without God in the world. How immense are the multitudes of men of this world here acting upon each other, exciting, irritating, fretting, and corrupting each other more and more. Here is the chief seat of the infidelity of England; its most vain-glorious, daring, and blasphemous advocates here strengthen each other by uniting together under Satan, their chief, for the destruction of man. Here the Romanist also can securely entrap and beguile unstable souls with all the arts of *the mother of abomination.* Here the ambitious have full scope and play in every department of

life for applying all their talents and resources to obtain the pageant of this world's greatness and glory. Here the covetous may especially *rise up early and late take rest*, and accumulate his miserable idols, this world's gold and silver, till death take all from him, and he shall carry nothing away with him but the canker and the rust to witness against him. Here also the literary may pursue, to the utmost limits of human research, their studies after the wisdom of this world. In fact, all who love this world, have in this vast metropolis, the seat of their empire; and their minds, and cares, and conversation, are wholly engrossed by the continual and busy occupation which their accumulated numbers and advantages here give them.

Now the flock of Christ is a little flock in the midst of all this worldliness. Bought by the blood of Jesus, called by his grace out of this evil world, and quickened by his Spirit, his people *come out and* are *separate* from a world lying in wickedness. Like the burning bush seen by Moses, it is preserved by divine power, in the midst of the flames, unconsumed. This church is in truth the salt that preserves the whole from destruction. O brethren, may you ever be as *the salt of the earth*, (Matt. v. 13.) and may this salt never lose its savour. O may you never even for a season be again incorporated with and become like that

mass of worldliness from which you have been taken. Rather may you be honoured of God in turning many around you from darkness to light, that they also with you may obtain an inheritance among them that are sanctified.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE TIMES ARE PECULIAR.

My brethren, we live in remarkable times; one of those æras which may well be called critical. Just as the time when the apostles first diffused the gospel of Christ, or when the Reformation revived the gospel, were each a crisis, so is the present day a crisis in the history of the world. God has been marvellously at work, stirring up his people to enlarged efforts to diffuse his gospel; and Satan has been marvellously at work intending to hinder, yet unconsciously helping forward, the triumphs of the gospel.

Yet is there much in the church, and in the world, that may appall the stoutest heart, and lead to deepest humiliation and prayer.

Many of us can remember the outbreaking of the first French revolution, and the changes it produced throughout Europe. We have lived to see a second revolution, still more portentous in its signs, and likely in its progress to affect every civilized nation. It is manifest that the foundations of the earth are out of course, the pillars of it are tottering, and God is shaking every thing,

and uprooting the ancient things, that that kingdom which cannot be shaken may be established. God is using implements that he will lay aside when they have accomplished his work. We see the loosening of the soil about every plant—we see the trembling and waving of the deeply-rooted trees of evil, and we are sure that our Lord's word must be realized. Popery, infidelity, Mahomedanism, paganism, superstition, merely nominal Christianity, and in the words of Christ, *every plant that my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.*

And when, after taking this general view, we look at our own country in particular, the Christian's heart must feel that there is much to be anxious for about the best interests of England.

The characteristic of our times is eminent ungodliness in men who yet bear the Christian name. They deny not the faith in general in open avowal of their unbelief; they call themselves Christians; but the very character of all their actions is, *There is no God*—the very spirit which animates them is a throwing off of all authority and restraint, divine and human, saying, *Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.* And these principles have spread to such an extent as to loosen all the former bonds of society—*there is no fear of God before their eyes.*

We see this in some striking features. The

Sunday newspapers, in thousands and tens of thousands, issue from the press, and in righteous punishment for the national sin of not restraining so great a violation of God's holy law, circulate principles of insubordination and contempt of authority, and diffuse the worst of poison, even poisoning the springs of men's actions; and if the fountain be bad, if the principles be corrupt, what else can be the streams? The open avowal of infidelity is another painful feature. Our more pious forefathers would indeed have been appalled that shops for the sale of avowed infidel publications should be opened and encouraged, that the sabbath should have its lecturers in infidelity, and that periodical infidel works should have free circulation and sale. Ought we not to be humbled? Will not God visit for these things?

Another feature that may excite much anxiety is holding 800,000 of our fellow beings in slavery; after all the light that has been thrown on this subject, I consider the guilt of England as not small, in still continuing unredressed so serious an evil. The Egyptians were destroyed for keeping in bondage the Israelites; and God grant us grace to deliver our slaves from bondage before our neglect calls down merited judgments upon us.

Other features of the times might be noticed, but they have in a measure been more or less the characters of every age; the spirit of drinking

among the poor, the frauds in trade, the hardness of heart which calculates only the gain to be acquired, the pride, oppression, and dissipation of the higher ranks, and the insubordination, and deceit, and recklessness of the lower, however, form a mass of growing national iniquity that may well fill us with sorrow, and confusion of face before God.

The state of the church of Christ will also cause much anxiety to the considerate Christian.—Corinth itself had not the multiplied divisions and the contentions among brethren that London now has. I mean not among nominal Christians, nor among different denominations, but among Christians "*holding the head.*" It is painful indeed to see the multitudes that are carried away by every wind of doctrine, and that seek after novelties, as if something new was to be discovered in Christianity. Faith, hope, and love, the substance of all experimental truth, and Christ crucified, the sum of saving knowledge, are neglected for speculative refinements and uncertain views of futurity. Others again are carried away by the love of criticism and new canons of interpretation into the very regions of infidelity. Hence also a dangerous reaction leading to the neglect of sound criticism, the despising of prophesyings, and shutting the mind against growth in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus.

When I look at these things I am reminded of our Saviour's words to his disciples, and I would address them to you: *Will ye also go away?* I am afraid lest any, especially of the younger part of my flock, of whose ardent zeal and devotedness I have had many proofs, should be led away by those who, though pious men, hold and are zealous to propagate new theories in religion, as if there could be a superior way of life than the meek, contrite, humble, and loving way arising from the Spirit's work on the heart, the view of our own depravity, and the Saviour's rich grace in freely justifying and then sanctifying and making us meet for heaven. I fear lest any should become heady and high-minded, trusting in themselves that they are the temple of the Lord, and despising others.

These are sifting times; men's hearts are failing them for fear of what is coming on the earth; they are exciting times, and Christians may be carried away with the excitement; but ever remember Christ's words, *My kingdom is not of this world;* ever act on Solomon's direction, *My son, fear thou the Lord and the king, and meddle not with them that are given to change.* (Proverbs xxiv. 21.)

True it is that any thing is better than a general torpor and death in religion, and self-satisfaction in that torpor and death; and the very excite-

ment of the present day shews that there is great good going on; yet many peculiar temptations beset the Christian at such times, and those who would avoid them must walk closely with God, and wait constantly upon him.

II. THE PRACTICAL DIRECTIONS GIVEN.

Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace.

Here are four plain practical directions. May the Lord enable me duly to set them before you.

BE PERFECT.

Be entire and complete. Be consistent throughout; a thorough Christian walking worthy of the Gospel. This includes the whole practical walk of the Christian.

The root of this perfection is only in the Lord Jesus Christ and our union with him. As we are one in Christ we are perfect. *Ye are complete in him.* You are witnesses how constantly your minds have been directed to Him, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending. All your justification is in him who is made of God unto you righteousness. All your adoption is in him, *to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.* (John i. 12.) All your sanctification is by him. *He is made of God unto*

us sanctification, (1 Cor. i. 30,) as the fulness of the Spirit was received by him for sinners, and is from him communicated to them, that they may be enlightened, purified, and comforted. Never can I regret having directed you simply to the Saviour for all you need; and had I a thousand tongues, they should all speak of Christ, and direct the hearers only to him. Now abide in him.

But, if you would be perfect, while God is working *in you to will and to do of his good pleasure*, you must *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*. (Phil. ii. 12, 13.) *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him*. (Col. ii. 6.) Nothing is more essential to your prosperity than maintaining habitual communion with God. My beloved brethren, I beseech you to seek God in private prayer, with all diligence and patient perseverance every morning before you go to your business, and let not this all-important work be conducted carelessly and cursorily, but earnestly and steadily. And again in the evening, it is a bad habit to defer private devotions till a late hour, when usually men become heavy and sleepy. Many Christian families have found it a good rule for the several members to retire at a fixed and early hour in the evening, for their more private devotions. The due and serious observance of family worship, including

a hymn of praise, reading the Scriptures, short observations upon the portion read, and a devout prayer, is another material part of the order of a religious household walking according to the rules of the gospel. The diligent, holy, watchful and conscientious keeping of the Sabbath-day, is eminently needful for your soul's welfare. As is the regular attendance at the preparatory meetings, and at the monthly and other communions around the table of the Lord, seasons in which we have now so long together enjoyed fellowship with our Saviour, and fellowship with each other. O my brethren, be not slack and negligent in private preparation for those duties; your spiritual profit in them is greatly connected with previous diligence in retired duties, in holy meditation, self-examination, humiliation, prayer, and renewed exercises of faith. My prayer for you is, *the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.* (Heb. xiii. 20, 21.)

BE OF GOOD COMFORT.

Are any of you cast down? I believe that some of you, knowing that there has been a remarkable blessing in the last year or two of my ministry

here, and that institutions have been formed among us that have been greatly prospered, have been ready to fear that these things may not go on, when the instrument in some degree used, has been removed. But why despond? remember David's resource, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.* (Psalm xlii. 11.) The same gracious God who makes use of what instruments he pleases, knows what his garden needs, and if he lays one aside, or takes it for other work, it is only to raise another instrument that shall more completely accomplish his work. I would apply to you Jacob's consolation to Joseph; though I remove God does not. The dying Patriarch said, *I die, but God shall be with you, and bring you to the land of our fathers.*

It pleased God to bless among you a sermon upon these words, *Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?* Some, I believe, remember that sermon: now you and I are called to practise in this instance the duty there prescribed. O it is good to look wholly off the poor creature, and to glory only in the Creator. And what grounds of comfort there are for you! True, you are needy creatures; the very fulness and extent of God's

promises shew this, for there is no useless promise; but you cannot have a want for which there is not a supply in the promise; you cannot have a fear but there is a suitable encouragement.

Only look up to your heavenly Parent. O what inexpressible glories and riches and blessedness centre in Him as the ever-living and ever-flowing fountain of all good; He has all wisdom and all truth, all power and all tenderness,—all holiness, and all compassion, all majesty, and all love. With such a Father how can you despond! Be of good comfort, God is your Father.

Only look up to the Lord Jesus Christ; *the brightness of his Father's glory*, (Heb. i. 3,)—your all in all. Do you feel that you are lost? what a Saviour is here for the lost! Do you feel that you are guilty? what a Redeemer for the guilty! Do you feel that you are sinful? what a High Priest for the sinful! Are you sensible of your ignorance? O what a prophet and teacher for the ignorant! Are you thinking that you are weak and defenceless? O what a King you have; the King of kings, fully able to protect all his people. Be of good comfort, Christ is your Saviour.

Or again, if you want grounds of comfort, only look up to the Holy Spirit. He is the very Comforter of the comfortless; the teacher, the guide, the helper of the elect of God. Do you mourn under your corruption? O what a Sanctifier is at

hand to purify you! Do you feel your deadness? O what a quickening Spirit is the Divine Spirit! only pray with David, *Thy Spirit is good, lead me in the land of uprightness. Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's sake.* (Psalm cxliii. 10.) He sanctifieth all the elect people of God.

Do you doubt if you are among his elect? Go to Jesus, and so make it sure. *All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me.* Do you think that he will not receive you; hear his assurance, *Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.* (John vi. 37.)

Do you fear that your sins cannot be pardoned? O yes, they can, whatever they be; if you go to Christ, his blood *cleanseth from all sin: Come now, and let us reason together, Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.* (Isaiah i. 18.)

Do you doubt whether you shall persevere to the end? Were this left to yourself you might well doubt; but your soul is in better hands—even *kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.* (1 Peter i. 5.)

Do you feel the loss of earthly friends who have been a blessing to you? O think of Him who only made them to be any blessing, and who has said, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee; so that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and*

I will not fear what man shall do unto me. (Heb. xiii. 5, 6.)

But my heart is full, and I stop. May our God pour out his Spirit so fully upon you, that you may receive a rich blessing even in our parting sermons, and we may together devote ourselves from this day, afresh to his service. *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us an everlasting consolation and good hope through grace; Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.* (2 Thess. ii. 16, 17.)

SERMON XVIII.

SECOND FAREWELL SERMON.

2 CORINTHIANS XIII. 11.

Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

I RESUME once more the consideration of St. Paul's address.

In the morning, I stated these points as included in our text. 1. The circumstances in which this farewell address was made; 2. The practical directions given; 3. The parting good wish expressed; 4. The promise added. We have already dwelt on the first part of the subject, and have also explained two of the four practical directions given. I proceed with the third practical direction.

BE OF ONE MIND.

I must say, thanking God for this grace, that you have been remarkably so hitherto. It has been my joy and comfort to witness your unanimity. When I consider how many hinderances there are to this, how Satan delights to sow divisions among brethren, and how many corruptions in one heart tend to excite and stir up strife and contention in the hearts of many, I cannot but admire the grace of God which has united us together in the bonds of Christian love. I doubt not that God has much blessed our Religious Societies to the furtherance of this, while he has given us a spirit of union in carrying them forward. Our District Visiting Society, formed under the sanction, and with the kind assistance of the rector of the parish, has brought us together on the interesting Christian duty of visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction. Our schools for religious instruction, our Infant School, our Missionary Association, and the other charities connected with our chapel, have had the same effect; and in all, the spirit of Christian unity has been vouchsafed, disposing us to submit *one to another in the fear of God.* To God be all the glory. Now *let brotherly love continue.* Let the same spirit ever characterize all your intercourse with each other, and with the beloved brother who succeeds me.

For this end come out from the world. Christians must now be more and more separate and distinct from an ungodly world. In the midst of all the scenes around of political and national excitement, lift up the standard of the cross; be every where decided for Christ; the more openly you wisely confess him, the more peace will you have within, and the more useful you will be among your brethren. The more bold you are for Christ, in the spirit of Christ, and according to the word of Christ, the more you will gain the love of his true disciples, and no love in this world is comparable to theirs.

Above all, beware of ungodly connexions. Let not any worldly advantages tempt you to unite yourselves in business with those who hate the gospel. Especially let me, as a parting caution, charge my younger hearers, never to unite themselves in marriage to those whom they have not good reason to believe to be truly converted to God. The scripture rule is express, *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?* Nothing has been more injurious to the soul, than ungodly connexions. Many a fair and beautiful blossom that gave rich promise of fruit, has thus been

withered and blighted. Make, then, those who love the Lord Christ the companions of your choice. You cannot go out of the world, but while you are in it, be not of it. Learn the happy skill of the Christian, to live above the world while he labours on it. You must inevitably associate with worldly men, they abound on every side, but O as *strangers and pilgrims*, only sojourn here, and *abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.* The more however Christians come out from needless connexion with the world, the more intimate is their communion with God, and their union and communion with each other.

4. LIVE IN PEACE.

This is the last practical direction. The Christian is eminently a man of peace. Never was it more needful to state distinctly this character, to the church of Christ, from dangers on all sides; dangers, on the one hand, of giving up or withholding truth; and dangers on the other hand, of speaking the truth not in love, but in pride and contention, or urging private opinions as if they were fundamental and all-essential truths of God. *The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and of good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy,* The directions on this head in the sacred scriptures are numerous.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. (Matt. v.) *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.* (Rom. xii. 18.) *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.* (Heb. xii. 14.) *Seek peace, and ensue it.* (1 Pet. iii. 11.) Our Lord and his apostles press this duty upon us, as if it were ever ready in this perturbed world to escape from us, and we must daily pursue it; or, in the words of St. Paul, *follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.* (Rom. xiv. 19.)

It will be clear, however, even from these directions, that peace is not to be desired at the expense of religious principle. This must be retained at all cost. Truth is never to be sacrificed for peace; but *speaking the truth in love* is our happy duty. When ungodly men abuse the truths of the Gospel, we must *contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.* But frequently peace is needlessly broken for the gratification of some sinful passion, and it is to be maintained by the denial of self in all its many forms of self-will, self-indulgence, self-wisdom, ease, pride, and vanity. If we be true followers of peace, we shall often suffer wrongfully for the sake of peace—*if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye.* (1 Peter iii. 14.) I

need not tell you, my brethren, that Christians are *as sheep among wolves*, and that their protection is not in an arm of flesh, but in the invisible arm of Jehovah. Be then men of peace. *Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.* (Phil. ii. 14, 15.)

The root of this peace, and that indeed from which alone Christian peace can grow, is a conscience pacified through the blood of Jesus. If I have peace with God, if I know that the King of kings is my friend, and will make all things work for my good, it matters little what the unquiet spirits of this world do to disturb or harass me. He who can *rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him*, is fixed on an immovable rock. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.*

The direction, Live in peace, is very comprehensive. It embraces, first of all, peace with God; let this be maintained pure and clear—let there be nothing between God and you; and for this end continually apply afresh to *the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel.* (Heb. xii. 24.) There will then be peace within, *the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, and which shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus;* a sweet tranquillity of mind,

calm amidst the storms and tempests of life, and composed, if not joyful, in tribulation. Peace with your brethren in Christ and all your fellow-creatures, has already been noticed; but this direction embraces also our enemies. *Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you.* Here is the lesson of our Divine Master; and if enabled to attain this lesson, often will you find that *when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.*

O that the Redeemer's bequest to his church may be yours: *My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you: let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

III. THE PARTING GOOD WISH EXPRESSED.

Finally, brethren, farewell.

These are hard words to say where there is real love, as they imply to us absence and separation; and yet they are words full of comfort. The Christian's farewell, and the Christian minister's farewell more especially, is an expression full of hope and full of blessing. The original (χαιρετε) might be rendered *rejoice* or *be glad;* and as there is nothing which shall not minister a blessing to the child of God, so every thing may

give him peace and joy. All things are in truth working for good. The meetings and partings, the absence and presence, of those dear to him, are all from the Lord, all in love, all for his good.

My circumstances call me to say farewell. May you indeed fare well both in body and in soul, in time and in eternity. The expression farewell, comprehends my heart's wish and prayer for you all.

It includes EVERY NEEDFUL TEMPORAL GOOD. I would say to each of my brethren in Christ, *Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.* May all providential dealings with you be full of loving-kindness and mercy. May our God *supply all your need out of his riches in glory, by Jesus Christ.* May every temporal good, as far as is consistent with your higher and best good, be bestowed upon you. May our God realise in your happy experience those rich promises made to his people: *Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.* (Deut. xxviii. 3—6.) I am sure that *if* you do steadily and determinately *seek first the*

kingdom of God and his righteousness; all those things shall be added unto you. Devotedness to Christ is the wisest way to insure the largest measure of temporal happiness, for his *ways are ways of pleasantness, and all* his *paths are peace.* Fare you well in this world's blessings.

It includes a good wish also for EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING: These are the chief blessings, given to God's elect, and preparing them for their heavenly home. O may you then, my brethren, all be greatly enriched with the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost! May the faith of each and of every one *grow exceedingly*, and your hope rise to the full assurance of hope, and your love towards God and towards each other, and to all men, be yet more enlarged and enflamed. May the Holy Ghost dwell in you, and ever produce in you all his multiplied and varied fruits. May you be filled with joy and peace, gratitude and thankfulness; may contrition, and humility, and compassion, and a tender conscience, mark all your characters, and may *the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.* Fare you well in spiritual good. May your souls prosper.

It includes a good wish also for ETERNAL BLESSEDNESS. All is infinitely short of your real happiness without this; but indeed spiritual blessings are the very meetness for heavenly and everlasting

blessedness. You must be born again before you can see the kingdom of God, you must attain holiness if you would see the Lord; the title to glory is Christ's work, out of us, the meetness for glory is from the work of the Spirit of Christ in us. Now *God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life.* O my brethren, here is my chief, my best wish for you, that none of you may be wanting when God counteth up his jewels: that you may all be bound up in the bundle of life everlasting, and that all your names may be written in the Lamb's book of life. I call you to *fight the good fight, and lay hold on eternal life.* And O, may our God minister to each of us *an entrance abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

IV. THE PROMISE ADDED.

The God of love and peace shall be with you. A rich promise! O may it, in all its blessedness, be yours.

There is ever a connection between holy practice and holy joy—the ways of godliness are the ways of peace. The fulfilment of the practical directions which we have been explaining, will bring a richer enjoyment of the Divine presence with all those inestimable blessings that presence ever brings. This is according to that gracious

promise, *Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance.* (Matt. xiii. 12.) We have nothing without God, and where he gives one degree, it is a pledge to encourage us to hope for more. Attend to the practical directions, *Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace,* and then shall follow the blessing, *the God of love and peace shall be with you.* The due exercise of grace, which itself must be traced to sovereign and free love in God, brings more grace. The Holy Spirit loves to dwell in peaceful and tranquil bosoms: he is grieved and driven away when we admit angry contentions and unholy feelings to dwell in us and rankle in our hearts. O take heed how you quench the Spirit—that holy, Divine, and loving guest, that makes the body of the Christian the temple of God, from which the living waters are perpetually flowing!

TO WHOM ARE WE TO LOOK FOR THE BLESSING? *The God of love and peace.*

What a comfort it is, my brethren, to direct you hither! A mother on parting with her children to take a distant journey, feels it an unspeakable relief to be able to leave them with a kind and tender, with a skilful and watchful, with an able and confidential nurse or friend. And, my brethren, it is my greatest relief of mind, on leaving you, to be assured the God of love and peace shall be with you.

The God of love! What a title! *God is love.* Love in its essence, source, and fulness. All other love is but derived from him; there is no love that is sweet, and delightful, and excellent, in the creature, but it is a ray from his beauty and glory. The love of parents to children, and children to parents, is very tender and endearing; the love of husbands to wives, and wives to husbands, is very entire and intimate and comforting; the love of minister and people is a bond of which I now more than ever feel the force and strength; but all these are little drops and streamlets. There is a full river of love proceeding from God. The fountain-head of all love is God himself. O the wonders of his love! It has heights beyond the starry sky, it has depths beyond those of the great deep; it has lengths and breadths further than from east to west or north to south. It passes knowledge. No tongue can fully declare it. Nor can one human being who knows that God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, for a moment reasonably doubt his love.

The God of peace also! Peace flows from love. He is the author of peace, and lover of concord. And O how wonderfully has he displayed this character in the gospel of peace: *To wit that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them and hath com-*

mitted unto us the word of reconciliation; never then be tempted to look upon God as one who wills your destruction, as your hard master or your bitter enemy. This may be the view of God that the great enemy and your fallen nature would lead you to take. But the gospel shews him to you not as your enemy, but as your reconciled Father, *who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.* He will quiet every troubled bosom, he will calm every agitated thought; *He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.* I leave you in stirring and agitating times; men's minds are afloat and the elements of conflict are all around: *the Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm;* but he also *stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of the waves, and the tumult of the people.* To his people he is, in all, *the God of peace,* and the very signs of discord may be to you the emblems and tokens of the speedy approach of the Prince of peace. And if you want a refuge, O what a refuge is here, the God of peace! *Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers and shut thy doors about thee, hide thyself as it were for a little moment until the indignation be overpast. For behold the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth also shall disclose her blood and shall no more cover her slain.* But *the God of peace shall be with you.*

But let us more particularly notice WHAT IT IS TO HAVE THE GOD OF LOVE AND PEACE WITH US?

With you in all situations and circumstances; with you in the congregation, whenever you assemble together. O may you be filled with Divine love and peace; the doctrines of love and peace continually proclaimed from the pulpit and felt in every bosom; the riches of love and peace exhibited in brightest colours in your public baptisms, and around the table of the Lord when commemorating his dying love. In all your religious meetings may the God of love and peace preside and abundantly manifest the sweet savour of his graces. In your families may the same glorious Being condescend to dwell; even as if I said in each of your houses, *Peace be to this house*, so from the heart would I say, the God of love and peace be in all your dwellings. Receive into your hearts also the same great inhabitant, and *the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

O my brethren, well may you spare the feeble light of a taper if you have the bright shining of the full Sun of glory; well may you part with a messenger, if you have his Master himself as your guest and friend. His omnipotence meets all your weakness; His omnipresence visits you

in all your varied abodes; His exhaustless fulness of wisdom, love, and riches will supply all your necessities. Wherever he is, there is light and gladness, peace and love. Wherever he is, there is a supply of all your varied needs. Your ministers are but earthen vessels, and can convey but a limited supply; all human aid is but as that derived from a cistern: you have a fuller an inexhaustible source, and *my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.* I commend you all to the God of love and peace.

Before I conclude, let me once more address the different classes before me. May these parting words be used of God, to the calling in of any of his sheep, or to the edifying of any of his people.

And first I address *the unconverted.* Doubtless there are such here. In so crowded a congregation there must be those not truly converted to God. They may have heard and approved the truth, but they have never been turned from their sins. They have never experienced an entire inward change, and are not new creatures in Christ Jesus. They love the world and the things of the world; their treasure is in it, and their heart is in it. Once more then let this voice reach your ears, and may the Holy Spirit send it home to your hearts—Turn ye, turn ye. Hear

once more the gracious declaration of your God—*As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his ways and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel.* I tremble at the thought of your condemnation. O how fearful is the very supposition, that when we meet again it may be before the judgment-seat, and then that, instead of your being my joy, I am compelled to witness against you, and when I have to speak concerning you to say, "Time after time I preached thy word to them, I warned them, I entreated them, I laid thy promises, O my God, before them, I made known thy threatnings to them, but they would not hear!" some of you, are, I fear, walking still in the ways of ruin; your conduct is not that which stamps the Christian. O, I also would speak, even with many tears, of those *whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things.* Once more I set before you Christ and his salvation; once more I invite you to come to him; once more I tell you the Heavenly Father is ready to receive you, and Jesus to save you, and the Spirit to sanctify. God of all grace, grant ere it be too late they may come to thee. God of all grace, make these last words converting words to unconverted souls now before Thee.

Lastly, I address the CONVERTED, those to

whom sin is grievous and Christ is precious; those who love his word, his day, his house, his ordinances, and his people. May grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied unto you. *Ye are my joy and crown of rejoicing.* I have good hope through grace that you will persevere. *We live if ye stand fast in the Lord;* the words express my inward feelings concerning you. May the Lord himself hold up your goings in his paths. Our past communion has been pleasant and profitable. Often our hearts have been touched, and melted, and comforted under the sense of God's presence and love; the glow of devotion has warmed our bosoms together; the praises of the Redeemer, like one volume of holy joy and admiration, have together ascended up to the Heavenly Habitation; but all that we have hitherto enjoyed is but the foretaste of a more entire and more blessed communion. *Ye are come unto Mount Zion and unto the city of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant.* Soon shall we join that blessed company. Short indeed is the intervening time. But in that intervening time, may the bond of prayer still unite us; often may we meet at the

throne of grace, and at length for ever sing together the praises of him *who hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.—To him be glory and dominion for ever. Amen.*

THE END.

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